

*A TREASURY OF
FLOWER STORIES*




To Ruth With

Best Wishes from

Lucy

Ruth H. Palmer
Bellingham.



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A TREASURY OF FLOWER STORIES

UNIFORM WITH THIS BOOK

1. Old Celtic Tales
2. Northland Heroes
3. The Story of Siegfried
4. A Treasury of Flower Stories
5. Tales from Shakespeare (Book One)
6. Tales from Shakespeare (Book Two)
7. Tales from Dickens
8. Tales of Wallace and Bruce
9. Tales from Malory
10. Heroes of Old Britain
11. Ivanhoe
12. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
13. Tales and Legends of Scotland
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37. Robin Hood
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CAPTURED BY THE PIXIES

A TREASURY OF FLOWER STORIES

BY
INEZ N. McFEE

ILLUSTRATED BY
DOROTHY NEWSOME



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PREFACE

ONCE upon a time a great poet, walking by the margin of a lake, saw before him "ten thousand" daffodils tossing their heads in a sprightly dance which outdid the sparkling waves in glee. And so pleasant was the sight that the poet treasured it in his memory, and ever afterward at the recollection his heart danced with the daffodils, and at length he wove them into a beautiful poem.

Just so have other flowers whispered to their friends and lovers most wondrous stories and marvellous fables, until, to-day, it has been possible for the author to gather this treasury. And surely no more interesting or delightful treasury could be found anywhere! Straight from the Fairyland of Fancy come the myths and fables, sandwiched in with all sorts of flower-lore, dependable information, and the doings of fairies, genii, and pixies.

There is the tale of how the golden-rod and the aster came to be; we learn the legend of the narcissus, the iris, and of that dear little flower to which the good Father whispered low, "Forget-me-not"; there are stories of such friends as the gentians, the bluebell, the water-lily, the anemone, and the

hyacinth. We meet the glorious cardinal flower, Lady Columbine, and sweet my Lady Clover. Then there are the tales of "The Proud Poppy and the Little Blue Cornflower" and "The Dandelion"; we are told about the pixies and the tulips, and the wondrous hundred-petalled Christmas rose, which carried health and happiness to a little girl high up among the snow-capped peaks of Switzerland; and so on and on, until the treasury becomes a mine of richness, and the young reader comes back from the Fairyland of Flowers only when the end of the volume is reached.

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A TREASURY *of* FLOWER STORIES

THE LINE OF LIGHT AND WHAT IT BROUGHT

LONG, long ago, when the world was first new, two dear little sisters, Avilla and Arlie, dwelt on the long bright slope of a mountain where the sun always shone warmly and the birds sang their happiest; but alas! Arlie could only feel and hear these blessings; she could not see, for she had been born blind. Poor child! Poor little sister! Avilla questioned every one she saw, striving to find some way to help Arlie. It was so sad not to be able to see the many beauties which she herself so dearly loved!

Finally, one day a stranger told her of a wise old woman who lived in a cave many miles away. "She knows many secrets," he said, "and I've no doubt but that she knows of some way to make the blind see."

"I shall go to her at once," said Avilla hopefully, and though the way was long the happy thoughts in her heart made the time pass quickly, and she scarcely gave heed to the weary miles or the burning heat of the sun. "Oh, joy," she kept

saying, over and over again, "if Arlie can only be made to see!"

By and by she came to the dark cave where the wise woman was said to live, but there were no signs of her, and Avilla paused a moment. It was such a black, gloomy place! Suppose after all no one lived there! It looked desolate enough, a fit home for bats and owls and sleeping bears. Avilla stepped close and peered in. All was silent and dark, and most little girls would have turned away without more ado.

But not so Avilla. "Oh, joy," murmured her kind little heart once more, "if Arlie can only see!" And into the black hole she went, determined to do her best for her little blind sister.

Not a hand's-breadth could she see before her, and ere she had gone ten feet something cold and flappy struck her full in the face. But Avilla did not cry out. She knew it was only a blind bat, and the helpless, frightened thing made her feel all the more deeply for her sister. "Oh, joy," she said aloud, "if Arlie can only see!"

"Eh?" said a voice, not unkindly, and a curtain lifted a little way from the child, showing a bent old woman peering at her from her loom, close beside a little blazing bunch of faggots. "Eh, little one, what is that you say?"

"Oh, joy," stammered Avilla again, too surprised

and dazed to say other than her oft-repeated words, "if Arlie can only see!"

"Aye, indeed! Why shouldn't she see?" the old dame asked briskly.

"She can," returned Avilla, trustingly, "if you will only open her eyes. She is blind, you know—born blind. Please tell me how to cure her!"

"Precious little good it would do if I did!" cackled the old crone, shrilly now. "It would be no small task, and people can't trouble overmuch for the blind."

"If you please," begged Avilla earnestly, "I love my little sister dearly, and there is nothing I would not do to open her eyes. Nothing! Oh, joy, if Arlie can only see!"

A moment the old woman stared at the child, as though weighing her carefully. Then she stooped, and picking up a very long thread, handed it to Avilla, saying: "Take this; drag it round the world, and when you get back come here to me, and I will show you how your blind sister may be cured."

Gladly indeed Avilla set out. It was a long, long thread and she needed to exercise no little care to keep it trailing after her without catching and breaking. But she managed it blithely, and with never a frown, because of the little singing refrain in her heart: "Oh, joy, if Arlie can only see, what happy, happy times we shall have together!"

By and by her way led her to a great bleak forest, and for a moment the child's courage faltered: "I can never go in there alone," she murmured; "it is sure to be full of all sorts of horrible creatures."

"Look at the thread! Look at the thread!" whispered a cooling little zephyr, playing against her cheek.

Avilla turned, and looking back, lo! instead of the bit of dull grey flax there trailed after her a long golden line of light that seemed to point far back. And more marvellous than all, wherever the line of gold flecked a blade of grass, behold, straightway there bloomed a flower, and no two blossoms seemed alike! "How beautiful!" cried Avilla, and she hurried on at once, pausing every now and then to glance back, and always and anon in the wake of the golden line blossomed a little flowery pathway, which gladdened her heart anew, and lent speed to her flight.

Thus, though the forest was deep and long, Avilla did not mind. "What happiness these beautiful woodland blossoms will be to all who pass this way!" she cried joyously.

After a time she came safely out into the bright sunshine again, and here she presently found herself face to face with a new difficulty. Before her and on every side as far as eye could reach stretched a

low, swampy marsh. But Avilla did not pause. "I must go on!" she told herself stoutly, and the thought of her little sister made her brave. So she stepped boldly off across the mire, with the long golden thread trailing after her.

And, strange to relate, she did not sink in; instead the way seemed to dry before her, and in the wake of the gleaming thread rose clump after clump of beautiful golden flowers—marsh marigolds people call them to-day. Avilla, as she looked back, cried out delightedly, "How lovely! This will help others to cross!"

Nor did she find the way tedious, though the marsh was miles and miles in extent. "Oh, joy, if Arlie can only see!" she kept repeating in her heart. She felt sure now, sure of success! For was it not a magical line she was leading?

Presently, however, her mettle was tried to the very utmost. She reached a burning desert. No flowers could spring up here to gladden her heart; even the line of golden light must parch and shrivel unless she sped quickly. So with flying feet she hurried onward, following a little group of gay yellow butterflies which seemed to spring from nowhere for her guidance, nor paused to look behind until just as the sun disappeared behind a crimson cloud and the end of the desert was reached. Then what a sight met her gaze! In the path of

light which marked her trail tall palms had sprung up magically, and each grain of sand the golden thread had touched now sparkled as a diamond, an emerald, a ruby, or some other precious stone. It was beautiful indeed, like a scene from Fairyland, as in truth it was, and Avilla was fain to rest there through the night. It seemed to her that she could hear the birds singing in the palms long after the stars had come out on guard, and her dreams were happy indeed.

The next morning she was up and off betimes, with the golden thread blossoming in wondrous hues behind her as she went. After a time she reached a great mountain. "Oh, dear, how shall I ever go up over it?" queried the child, in dismay. Just then two strong eagles rose with outspread wings from their nest on a cliff-side near by and soared slowly aloft. For a moment Avilla's eyes followed them wonderingly. "They do it just by being brave and strong," she murmured. "So can I!" And she followed after, climbing on and on, and always managing to keep the soaring eagles in sight. As she neared the top she looked back and saw that the sharp, broken rocky mountain-side had changed into a beautiful mossy, flower-starred pathway! And again Avilla rejoiced that she had made the way clear and bright for others. What mattered all her rugged climb with this thought to cheer and gladden her!

Moreover, as she turned to go down the slope on the other side, what was her delight to find that it was the very mountain wherein the wise old woman lived deep in her hidden cave! Avilla's journey was all but done; she had made a golden trail of light and blossoms round the earth! Gleefully she ran downward, and burst in upon the old crone, crying happily:

"Here I am! Here I am! I have done all you told me to do! Will Arlie see?"

"At last! At last!" cried the old dame, jumping up from her flax to seize the golden thread. "Bless you, my child, I am free! I am free!"

And before Avilla's wondering eyes the old woman changed on the instant into a beautiful princess, with long golden hair and tender blue eyes, her face radiant with joy. She then told this story to Avilla: "I was a king's daughter, but I was so selfish and idle that I never thought of the happiness of others. So the fairies obliged me to live in this cave until I could find one who would be generous and brave enough to take the long dangerous journey round the world for the sake of others. I have waited and waited a long time. Now I can be happy again. Your line of light—love, and the beautiful bloom it has left in its path—has freed me, and you may be sure I will gladly help you. When you reach home you

will find a happy little sister with wide open eyes."

And so it was.

Next morning it would have been difficult to say which was the happier, Arlie or Avilla, as the two went hunting on the mountain slope for the many gay and wondrous blossoms which no one in all the world had seen before!

There grew a little flower once,
That blossomed in a day,
And some said that it would ever bloom,
And some said 't would fade away ;
And some said it was Happiness,
And some said it was Spring ;
And some said it was Grief and Tears,
And many such a thing ;
But still the little flower bloomed,
And still it lived and throve,
And men do call it ' Summer Growth,'
But angels call it ' Love' !

TOM HOOD

A STORY OF THE GOLDEN-ROD

A DISCONTENTED golden-rod bloomed in a sunny sheltered place one day in November. “Ah, me,” she grumbled, “why am I here? My friends are all dead and gone, and I am so lonely and weary. Not a soul has passed this way for a whole week!”

“’*Tsheveet*, ’*tshevee*,” called a gay musical voice, and a bright little goldfinch floated down in his funny, waving fashion. “Well, my dear,” he cried, “I am so glad to see you here. Your face is the only bit of brightness in this gloomy world this morning. ’*Tsheveet*, ’*tshevee*, may be, may be. Oh, yes, I sing whether the sun shines or not, and try to be happy, but sometimes it is uphill work! In the spring and summer my bright golden coat brings me happiness when all else fails, but there is nothing to be got out of this dull affair which Nature compels me to wear in the winter-time. However, I suppose she knows best—and say, what a jolly, sunny place this is! Seeds, seeds everywhere! I must bring my wife and children. Hush! Look your prettiest! Here comes a charming lady and a sweet little girl. I dare say you will get the release for which you have been longing. Good-bye!” And the

goldfinch darted away, waving and dipping as he went.

“Oh, mamma,” cried the little girl, “see! there is a dear little goldfinch! How odd he looks in his dull winter coat! I should never have known him but for his funny flight.”

Then she caught sight of the smiling golden-rod. “Oh, mother, look! Here is some golden-rod! I am so glad! I believe this little bit bloomed late just to make our homecoming the brighter! Come here to me, you precious. I shall carry you to my room, for you would soon fade and die here.” So saying, she plucked the lovely sprays and fastened them in her coat.

“Come, mother, let us rest for awhile on this sunny rock. Don’t you know some pretty tale about the golden-rod? This is as bright and shining as a fairy’s wand!”

“Fairies’ wands are mostly silver,” smiled the mother, seating herself. “But there is a sister-flower called the silver-rod that might well serve the fairies. It is the only white or silverish member of the family. All the others, and there are some eighty or more, are yellow. There is a legend concerning the golden-rod that will please you.

“It seems that once upon a time a certain cross old woman dwelt alone upon a mountain-top. For

her the sky was never blue, the bright sun shone only to scorch her garden, and she turned a deaf ear to the beautiful songs of the birds. Having lived so much alone, without joy in the beauty around her, she grew to think of nothing but herself and her own lonely lot, and thus became the more gloomy and bad-tempered. For you know no one can ever be glad and happy whose interests are entirely centred upon self.

“By and by strange stories came to be told concerning her. It was said that she was a marvellous witch who could transform creatures and things to suit her will. Two dear saintly little twin sisters, whom we will call Golden-hair and Astoria, heard of this magic power, and determined to go up and ask her to transform them into something that would be a benefit to the whole country round, and especially to the children of the poor. Accordingly they stole secretly away, and climbed bravely to the old witch’s hut.

“Now it chanced that some saw them go, but before they could reach them to call a warning the children had disappeared into the old woman’s tumbled, dreary home. What took place there no one ever knew, for no one ever saw the children again. But on the following day the hillside path which they had trod was abloom with beautiful wild flowers which swayed and tossed gaily in the wind and made

every heart glad that saw them. People thought them to be happy emblems of the children, and named them golden-rod and aster. Gradually these flowers spread far and wide, until there was scarcely a country road or neglected field where they were not to be found. They always bloomed side by side, as became loving twin sisters, and the people thought that this proved the truth of the tale. Perchance, too, a fairy made known that the children had asked the witch to transform them into shapes in which they might prove blessings to the poor. And, indeed, every one, no matter how needy or wretched, can have asters and golden-rod. These simple flowers are truly God's gift to the wayfarer.

"They seem to have no purpose other than to adorn the dusty roadsides and dry places where little else is inclined to grow. And their tufted downy seed, much like that of the thistle, is scattered far and wide. To the farmer they are merely weeds, and certainly they are hard to kill, but no one denies that they make the roadside and pastures more beautiful. They are great favourites with the goldfinch, for they furnish him with many a meal throughout the winter, when shorter-stemmed seed plants are hidden beneath the snow.

"The golden-rod belongs to that great plant

family called the Composites. It is related to the aster, dandelion, thistle, sunflower, chrysanthemum, marigold, and the dahlia. See if you can point out the peculiar traits which distinguish this important family.”

THE GENTIAN

"Oh! gentian I have found you out,
And you must tell me true :
See, I'll put my ear close down,
Where did you get your blue?"

"I found it, little one, here and there,
It was ready made for me ;
Some in your eyes, and some in the skies,
And some in the dark blue sea."

"And where did you get that love fringe,
Gentian, that you wear?"

"I caught a hint from your dark eyelash
And one from your curling hair."

"And why do you stand so straight and tall
When they say that you are wild?"

"Oh! that I learned in a different way
And not from any child."

ANON.

NOT every one knows the gentians, because alas! their beauty has been their downfall—few hands can refrain from plucking these lovely bits of colour where they appear, and as the next year's crop depends on the seed that is sown many spots that once bloomed in tints rivalling the bluest blue sky now stand bare and forlorn.

There are five species of gentians known in

England—the marsh gentian, the spring gentian, the small Alpine gentian, the small-flowered gentian, and the field gentian. The last is the most familiar; it is often found on hilly pastures, especially near the sea. Only two species exist in America—the fringed gentian and the closed, blind, or bottle gentian. The former is the great favourite of poets and artists, who love to portray it as a type of human steadfastness and courage. It bears beautifully fringed lobes, a single green-sheathed flower on a naked stalk.

The closed gentian flowers in clusters. “Fifteen species of gentian,” we are told, “have been gathered during half an hour’s walk in Switzerland, where the pastures are spread with sheets of blue. Indeed, one can little realize the beauty of these heavenly flowers who has not seen them among the Alps.” In all more than one hundred species are to be found throughout Europe.

The closed gentian never opens. The fringed gentian closes before dark. And there is a reason. Once upon a time, ’tis said, the queen of the fairies was out very late. Indeed, it was midnight, and the silvery moon had disappeared. The fairy hurried to a gentian and asked for shelter. The sleepy gentian said, “How dare you disturb me at this late hour? Find shelter elsewhere.” “I am the queen of the fairies,” said the poor frightened little one. “I do

not care for queens or kings," said the gentian. "I cannot help you." The fairy queen hurried away to another gentian, a beautiful specimen, standing erect on a tall stalk, and begged for a resting-place. "Dear little friend," said this peerless one, "I shall be happy to shelter you until the sun appears." So the queen slept soundly until nearly dawn. Before departing she said, "Gracious, kindly gentian, in future you and all your children shall have power to open and receive the light. But as for your churlish sister, closed she shall remain for ever and a day!"

Low, moist meadows and woodlands of the mountainous sections are the favourite dwelling-places of the gentians, and they are late comers.

Thou waitest late, and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

BRYANT

The gentians depend on the bumble-bees to scatter their pollen, and right willingly the big fellows accept the task, for the nectar of these flowers of their own favourite colour is the last feast of the season that is spread for them. Time was

when the botanists claimed that the closed gentian fertilized itself; "For," said they, "how could a bumble-bee enter this inhospitable, tightly closed flower?" But he does do it. And, indeed, now it is a pretty well established fact that the closed gentian keeps its petals locked for the especial benefit of its big booming favourites! The reason is plain. It has no fringes or hairs to entangle the feet of crawling pilferers, and no better way of keeping its pollen secure from the dew and rain, and from marauding butterflies, who are not willing to go over head and ears into the deep gentian pantries for nectar, and so are of no use in helping to fertilize seed.

Watch the bumble-bee at work. He comes booming along, with his keen eye carefully on the watch for signs. He alights on a cluster of 'bottles.' Some of the older ones are of deep reddish purple: these say plainly enough, "Nectar removed." No use wasting time there! The big powerful fellow looks about sharply. "Aha!" he says, "here are some bright blue bottles, with the daintiest of white labels. I'll try 'em!" Forthwith he thrusts his tongue through the valve of the nearest one, at the point where the five plaited lobes overlap one another. It isn't a particularly easy job; for the bottle is securely sealed. But at length it yields perforce, and in goes the bumble-bee's head and a

good bit of his body! He is careful, however, to leave his hind legs outside; for he has no wish to entomb himself in the bottle. And presently, having drained the nectar, he backs out, carefully brushes the pollen from his head and throat, and is off to try another bottle. But brush as he may, some of the yellow dust clings to his velvety person, and there is plenty to powder the next flower he seeks.

By and by, thanks to his kind offices, the flowers are all fertilized, the petals fall, and the little hairy seed-scales are formed and ready to ride away in the autumn gales. Fortunate indeed are those that strike into soft, moist soil at the end of the journey, and so embed themselves ready to germinate and grow in the spring.

Some species of the gentian are valued as 'ague weed.' They give a colourless bitter juice which has long been recognized as a tonic in medicine. Evidently the nectar pantries, however, contain something considerably more appetizing, or the bumble-bee would never go to the trouble of breaking into them!

THE FAIRY GARLAND

DEVONSHIRE, 'tis said, was once the kingdom of the fairies. Here ruled King Oberon and his wife Titania, and here on moonlight nights the 'little folks' held high revels. Belated travellers, crossing the lonely moors late at night, were often captured by the pixies and dragged away to their gay carousals, while gardeners, called out in the night to protect their charges against sudden changes of temperature, often came upon the most marvellous doings on their very lawns. On one such occasion, so the story goes, a banquet was in full swing, and the table was nothing less than

A little mushrome, that was now grown thinner
By being one time shaven for the dinner.

While rose-leaves did duty for the cloth, little silver spangles served as trenchers; a periwinkle and a cockleshell shared honours as the ewer and basin, and the glasses

Were all of ice not made to overlast
One supper, and betwixt two cowslips cast.

A little fairy, clad in a suit of rush, with a monks-hood flower for a hat, and a cloak of spider's web,

brought in the bottles, and—marvel of marvels—every bottle was a cherry-stone!

And most of them were fill'd with early dewe;
Some choicer ones, as for the king most meet,
Held mel-dew, and the honey-suckle's sweet.

The harebells and the trumpet-flowers furnished dainty music throughout the feast, and with what wondrous victuals was the table spread! Milk-white kernels of the hazelnut were the bread; while among the dishes were:

In white broth boyld, a crammed grasshopper;
The udder of a mouse; two hornetts' leggs;
Instead of olyves, cleanly pickl'd sloes;
Then of a batt were serv'd the petty-toes;
Three fleas in souse; a criquet from the bryne;
And of a dormouse, last, a lusty chyne.

After partaking bounteously the guests repaired to the toadstools round about, and danced and danced till the moonlight waned, when a threatening shower warned them to haste away.

Often and often were the fairies surprised taking refuge under toadstools, and on more than one occasion truthful gardeners stoutly affirmed that they had seen fairy serfs marching along, holding a toadstool umbrella over their queen as she tripped hurriedly home in the rain!

Always the harebell was used to summon the

fairies. A traveller crossing the moors one night had proof of this, and it was really on his evidence that these little bell-shaped flowers were so named. It seems that the gentleman was jogging slowly along, tired and weary, when there came suddenly to his ears the tinkle of a little musical bell, so unlike any that he had ever heard before that he felt on the instant that it must belong to the fairies, and he paused, waiting. Nearer and nearer the sound came, but it did not grow much louder. Presently a hare dashed by, running like mad, and round his neck was a little tinkling blue bell-flower.

“Whither away, hare?” called the man quickly. “Pray tell me!”

“There is no time,” returned the hare, over his shoulder. “Do not seek to detain me. I’m off to summon the fairies to a special meeting called by the queen.”

Who knows—perhaps it was that very night that the little folks met to settle where the various flowers should grow. For it may have been, perchance, the very eve of the creation of many of our loveliest blossoms. But you may not have heard of this event.

It seems that long ago, when only a few humble flowers were strewn here and there on the earth, Sandalaphon, the Angel of Prayer, stood in the gateway of the Celestial City receiving the petitions

that were wafted up to him. So many of these were from the poor and the lowly, people whose cares were so great that their backs bent under the heavy weight and their voices trembled with the burden of their crosses, that the angel was moved to pity. Gathering the prayers like a sheaf in his outstretched arms, he held them a moment thus, and then let them slip back to earth, changed by his touch into a great bunch of blooming plants of every colour and shape, and of such pleasing brightness that all who beheld them must feel the gladder and happier for the vision.

Straight into the eager arms of the fairy queen's own handmaidens fell the marvellous gift, and presently a great cry of delight went ringing throughout the realm: "Come one, come all, and help with the fairy garlands!"

Such a busy night it was! How the little people flew about here, there, and yonder! Such division and subdivision of the tiny plantlets as there was, that every hill and vale might be planted! Such discussion as to which specimens might be expected to thrive best in moist places, in meadows, on wind-swept hillsides, in the woods, and where not! No doubt Sandalaphon himself directed the labour, for not a single mistake was made, and so magically did the plants grow and thrive that shortly afterward the gardeners began to find fairy garlands

left nightly here and there on their walks and paths—garlands containing many surprising, unheard-of blooms of great beauty, which the lucky finders were only too happy to transplant and tend with watchful care.

Always with the garlands were left, tossed here and there, helter-skelter, the folks' gloves (fox-gloves), which the 'little people' wore for mittens. Proof positive that it was they who brought the garlands! Besides, shortly it was found that no one dared to pick a bit of the delicate white bloom of the snapperjack, or stitchwort, which had sprung up to amble gracefully about over the hedgerows. It was sacred to the pixies! And any one so bold as to gather it was sure to be pixie-led! This 'pixie flower' was always the foundation for the fairy garlands; sometimes, indeed, it made up the whole, showing plainly that it was the prime favourite of the 'little folks.'

Two other common plants, the fairy-butter and the familiar little chickweed, were often entwined in the garlands, and they were never absent from the glens where the fairies dwelt. The fairy-butter is especially a plant of the mining regions, and no better proof is needed that the fairies lived about the mines. Indeed, it is said that when the dangerous damp came up from the mines at night such knocking and hammering arose as might be heard around the

countryside, while the fairy-butter plant rocked backward and forward, and on the worst occasions was even heard to groan, no doubt in sorrow for the little people who most certainly were perishing in the heavy damp.

As for the little chickweed, it was the fairies' weather-glass, as it is the poor man's to-day. And a very reliable little barometer it is! Here is what the wise Francis Bacon thought and set down after close study of the habits of this intelligent little weed: "When the chickweed bloom spreads boldly and fully in the morning, no rain will happen for four hours or more. If it continue open, no rain will disturb the summer day. When it half hides its tiny flower, the day is generally showery; but if it entirely shuts up, or veils the white flower with its green mantle, let the traveller put on his great coat, and the ploughman expect rest from his labour."

The red chickweed or pimpernel also served the fairies as it does the little English maid to-day. Says this little rosy-cheeked miss:

"I'll go and look at the Pimpernel,
And see if she thinks the clouds look well!
For if the sun shine,
And 'tis like to be fine,
I will go to the fair!
So, Pimpernel, what bode the clouds in the sky?
If fair weather, no maiden so merry as I!"

Now the Pimpernel flower had folded up
Her little gold star in her coral cup,
And unto the maid
A warning she said :
“ Though the sun smite down
There’s a gathering frown
O’er the checkered blue of the clouded sky ;
So, tarry at home, for a storm is nigh.”

So punctual is the pimpernel in opening its petals between seven and eight in the morning, and closing promptly at two in the afternoon, that it is called the ‘shepherd’s clock.’ It is of no use on cloudy days, however, for then it does not open at all.

A LEGEND OF THE NARCISSUS

OF course you know the beautiful narcissus. There are several members in the family, and grandmother groups them under the general name of daffodils and jonquils. They appear in a variety of dress, from many shades of yellow to white, and white edged with pink or yellow. Some of them are very fragrant.

Greek mythology tells us that once the narcissus was a beautiful youth who fell in love with the reflection of his own face in the water, and would not leave it. For his foolishness and vanity the gods changed him into a flower.

In the far-off land of China they tell a much more interesting tale. It seems that a certain rich man, on his deathbed, bequeathed to his elder son all his money and lands, excepting one poor, bare, stony acre, which he gave to his younger son. As soon as the funeral rites were over the fortunate young man made haste to spread a great feast for his friends and make a gorgeous show. Pleased with their flattery, he gave one entertainment after another and squandered his money in all sorts of wild and useless ways. Soon his inheritance was gone and the foolish man realized, too late, that he

had only given one more proof of the Chinese proverb: 'He who earns not soonest spends.'

But the younger son—what of him? Poor, and mocked on every hand by his brother and his riotous companions, he left the place in despair, and became a wanderer. On a certain day, tired and sick at heart, he lay down in a delightful shady nook, beside a rippling, limpid mountain stream, and fell into a deep sleep. As he dreamed, a beautiful water-nymph or naiad, clad in fleecy, snowy robes, appeared before him and murmured encouragingly:

"Arise, my friend, take heart and hope. Look at the lovely flowers which bloom about you on every hand. Take of their bulbs and plant them upon your barren acre. Water them and tend them with watchful care and a great miracle shall be worked for you. Always he who is willing to work and watch and wait may reap a glorious harvest and receive a rich reward."

Surprised, the young man awoke and looked eagerly around. But the nymph had vanished. "'Twas but a dream," he murmured bitterly, and got slowly to his feet; "good fortune is not for such as I."

But even as he spoke he was conscious of a lighter feeling in his heart. The world did not look so dark and dreary; the flowers seemed to nod at

him with friendly, smiling faces, and his feet seemed reluctant to move on. By and by he decided to accept the advice of the dream-nymph and fell feverishly to work. All day long he gathered bulbs and plants with patient care, and then, as night closed in, he set out for his distant home, almost staggering beneath his load.

Caring not for the sneers of his neighbours, who deemed him crazy, he planted his treasures, carefully screened them from the sun, and sought with copious waterings and tender care to make up for the lacking elements in his unfruitful soil. And Nature abundantly rewarded his efforts. Presently the rocky, barren field was covered with tender shoots and blades of green. The young man redoubled his efforts and almost lived upon his love for these tender plants, which seemed to sympathize with him and understand his every whim and mood. The wondrous miracle which the nymph had promised was forgotten, and he ceased to wait expectantly, as he had at first, for the flowers to prove keys to some hidden mine of wealth, after the fashion of key-flowers in fairy lore. Day by day these children of the fields grew into his heart, and he could not contain his joy when the first blossoms burst.

By New Year's morning the once barren fields were a wondrous sight, and people came from far



HE SET OUT FOR HIS DISTANT HOME

and near to view them. Such a wealth of blossoms, from the deepest shades of orange and yellow to purest white! How the people wondered and exclaimed, and how delighted was the poor, despised younger son! But he was most generous and freely gave a flower to all.

The rich, the poor, the young, the old,
Drank nectar from the cups of gold,
No matter what their dower.

Time passed; and ere many moons had come and gone the younger son gained all that the elder had lost, and all from the care of 'bootless flowers.' The magic spell hinted at by the nymph had indeed been worked. The poor young man had grown rich and great through careful attention to a very small opportunity. Fortune ever smiled brightly upon him, as she always does upon those who faithfully work; for 'Work reaps its own reward.'

Centuries have gone by since he lived and loved his flowers, but the people have not forgotten him. Always in every window, whether of humble home or palace fair, the Chinese sun on New Year's Day greets the bloom and fragrance of the sweet narcissus. And the people love to tell their children the story of the flower, and to teach them to guard well what they have that more may be added unto their store.

The 'Chinese lily,' the narcissus, is the poor man's emblem of thrift and care. Each citizen carries one on New Year's Day and sips from its bell-shaped cup the nectar of hope and cheer which the flower once carried to the poor despised outcast who had not home nor where to lay his head. It whispers to all, like the narcissus of old, that work is the happy talisman, the blessed key-flower which unlocks the door to wealth and happiness untold. He who would succeed must rise betimes and carry to his task such a loving interest that Fortune cannot help but be attracted to his lot.

THE BLUEBELL

NO flower is more beautiful than the bluebell. It is one of the dearest, daintiest wild flowers of the countryside. But no doubt you are as well acquainted with it as you are with the buttercup and dandelion. Perhaps you may even have heard the tiny bells ring! For they do ring, it is said, loud enough to attract the ears of myriads of flying insects and call them to feed upon the sweet nectar held in their pretty cups.

I wonder if you have ever hunted for the bluebell in its quiet woodland home, or, perchance, gathered it from its own shady corner in grandmother's dear, old-fashioned garden. A certain writer says: "There is something about the bluebells more beautiful in form of foliage and stem, and in the graceful way in which they rise to panicles of blue, than in almost any other family." And how cleverly they droop their heads in order to protect their nectar from the rain and the dew! This is necessary in order to keep them sweet and attractive for the bees, beetles, rose-chafers, and other insects which unconsciously perform the great service of spreading the pollen (the yellow dust which you know so well in the centre of all flowers) from one blossom

to another, and thus enable them to be fertilized and the seed to be formed, so as to continue the supply of bluebells from one generation to another.

The bluebell used to be cultivated in old English gardens for ornament and for the benefit of the bees, who love to gather its nectar. Besides dwelling in the forest, it makes its home in rich, moist meadow lands, and will even entrench itself in the damp crevices of rocks where there is enough rich earth to give it a foothold. A meadow deeply blued with lovely masses of bluebells in mid-April is a wondrous sight.

According to tradition, the bluebell did not always have its beautiful colour. It was once pure white and bloomed, half hidden, in a dim ravine shaded by towering trees which shut out the golden sunlight, and, indeed, all the sky, excepting one tiny stretch of blue. Day after day the lonely little flower eyed this bit of blue with hungry longing. How beautiful it was! How clear and true it seemed when the little, fleecy white clouds tripped across it! And how brave it looked when it slipped from behind the angry rain clouds which sometimes hid it from sight! Nothing ever seemed to dim its brightness or affect its purity, and the little flower longed with all its soul to be like it. Finally it began to pray to a bright star which shone in the blue at night, asking its aid.

Then a miracle happened. Slowly and surely the pure white of the dainty flower began to be tinted with blue like the azure of the skies upon a summer night. The bees and beetles hung over it in admiration; they hurried to the other white flowers of its kind farther down the ravine. As they whispered of the change in their neighbour, all unknown to themselves they left some of her pollen, which had clung to their feet and legs. And so new seeds were set in these flowers, and in their hearts came a desire that they too should be like the blue sky which had so pleased their relative.

Next spring when the new generation of plants in the ravine bloomed they were all tinged with blue. The insects were delighted. It was so much easier to find these flowers with their gayer, more attractive colours, and they hung over them and forgot all about the white blossoms farther down the valley. So the neglected white ones died for want of friends and messengers to carry their pollen, and the blue ones lived and thrived. In the course of several generations the flowers became the deep blue, slightly tinged with pink, which we now find them, and thus earned their title to the name 'bluebell.'

The poet who learned this story from the birds finds in it a lesson for all. He says that those who strive with watchful eyes after all things pure and noble shall take their image by and by. For

the thoughts of our hearts tinge our actions and stamp their reflection upon our faces.

I wonder if you have ever seen the seeds of the bluebell. If you have not, just keep your eyes open for them. They are four little seed-like nuts. When fully ripe and matured they have a queer, leathery, wrinkled appearance. If you know where there is a clump of bluebells, you must watch for their seed to ripen. Find out, if you can, the methods which the flower uses to have her seeds scattered. Contrast the seeds of the bluebell with the tufted, flying seed of the dandelion, which blows whither the wind listeth, and with the funny-winged 'keys' of the maple-tree.

Botanists will tell you that the bluebell belongs to the bell-flower, or *Campanula*, family, of which there are some two hundred and fifty species. Most of the family are showy and ornamental, and a large number of the tribe favour Northern regions. Bluebells, it is said, are often found growing among snow and ice, safely protected by their downy suits. The harebell is smaller and daintier than the ordinary bluebell, and it is this that figures in literature as 'the bluebells of Scotland.' It blooms everywhere, "far away from any house site, on sandy hilltops, on quarry edges, or set in jewel-like clusters in the emerald of the pastures."

THE WATER-LILY

NO doubt you know the water-lily, and have often seen it floating upon the water as brightly and gracefully as a spirit princess from Fairyland. It belongs to a very large family and is scattered all over the world. Britain produces three species—the white water-lily and two yellow varieties. As might be expected from its wide range, the leaves and flowers vary greatly in size, shape, and colouring. The famous Amazon water-lily has gigantic floating leaves, three feet or more in diameter, and magnificent flowers in proportion, while the dull flowers of the water-shield are only about half an inch across. Occasionally a sweet-scented, pinkish or pinkish-red species is found growing in still water in North America.

The bloom of the sacred Egyptian lotus, a species of the water-lily, varies from deep red to pinkish and pure white. In the tropical regions of Africa and India there is a blue water-lily. It has been imported to other countries, but in colder regions it is very tender and grows only in aquariums.

Botanists claim that the time is coming when the white water-lily will be no more; for the beetles and other insects which distribute the pollen care

more for the brighter coloured lilies. Of course, if this be true, and the insects should largely neglect the white lilies, then their seed will not be so plentiful, and they will become scarcer; but we hope that they will not become extinct for "another couple of thousand years or so," as Mr Grant Allen says, for we could not bear to lose this snowy-hued lily with its heart of living gold.

The water-lily opens early every morning and closes again in the afternoon. Why is this? To quote Mr Allen, "Because that is just the very time when the insects that fertilize it, or carry pollen from head to head, are flitting about in the open sunshine. It is only in order to attract these insects at all that the flowers possess their bright colours and store their little stock of honey or nectar. No plant can show that truth more clearly, indeed, than these very water-lilies. For if you look at the centre of the blossom, you will find it occupied by many rows of small, yellow pollen bags, hanging out at the end of long finger-like stalks, which we call stamens. But toward the edge of the blossom the stalks of the stamens seem to flatten out, gradually, more and more, and the pollen bags to grow less and less conspicuous, till at last they pass imperceptibly into the form of petals or flower leaves without any trace at all of the original pollen bags. This shows that the

showy petals are in reality only stamens which have got flattened out by slow degrees in order to attract the fertilizing insects."

These words suggest a thought which many of us have not considered, viz., that the plants flaunt their many-hued blossoms not for our pleasure alone, but also to attract the bees, beetles, and insects to come and distribute their pollen. What a new insight it gives us concerning the importance of these humble creatures, and how great are their opportunities to brighten the world about them!

But to return again to the water-lilies. All lilies, no matter what their colour, grow from a strong horizontal rootstock, much like a strand of long, thick rubber. And how do they grow? Just like this:

They draw their strength for leaf and stem
Out of the earth that cradled them ;
Then catch in their tiny hands the rain
To wash them clean of earthly stain,
And lift their faces in air and sun
That clothe in beauty every one.
To heaven above from earth below
That is the way the lilies grow !

The Indians have a beautiful legend concerning the white water-lily or 'lily-star,' as they call it. It seems that long ago a certain star fell in love with the many beauties of the earth and longed to come down and dwell near the Red children, who

seemed so happy in their games and sports. Each day she drew nearer and nearer until at last she hung just above the tree tops. The people watched her anxiously; for they could not make out whether she was an omen of good or evil. At last the star spoke to them.

“O good people,” she called, “I love you, and I wish to dwell near you where I may gaze into your rippling lake-mirrors, scent your myriads of sweet-smelling flowers, and listen to your beautiful gay-plumaged birds, and the happy voices of your dear little children. Tell me where I shall make my home.”

The simple-hearted people were delighted, and suggested one after another the mountain-top, the heart of the wild rose on the hillside, and the cool depths of the forest, but none of these suited the star. They were too far off. She wished to dwell where she might see the children every day, where they might play around her, and where she might sometimes feel their dear little hands touching her. At last a wise young chief bethought himself of the lake.

“Why not try the lake?” he cried. “Here our people spend the greater part of every day. The sunlight loves to glimmer on its waters, and the skies, clouds, and stars reflect themselves in its mirrors.”

“’Tis the very thing!” cried the star. “Bid the children watch for me.”

Accordingly the very next night the star floated downward on a wave of sweetest music and buried itself in the lake. For a long time the people watched, expecting a miracle. But nothing happened. The star was apparently gone for ever, and they retired disappointedly to their wigwams. But the next morning, lo! a beautiful lily with pure white petals and a rich golden heart floated where the star had gone down.

HEPATICA

When April awakens the blossom folk,
And blue-birds are on the wing,
Hepatica, muffled in downy cloak,
Hastens to greet the spring.

Careless of cold when the north wind blows,
Glad when the sun shines down,
She opens her wrap, and smiling, shows
Her dainty lavender gown.

Her sisters are robed in pink, and some
Are in royal purple dressed,
And over the hills and fields they come
To welcome the darling guest.

The children laugh as they pick the flowers,
And the happy robins sing ;
For, blooming in chill and leafless bowers,
Hepatica means the spring.

ANNA PRATT

WE often find this brave little harbinger growing amid the snow on the woodland hillside. How it escapes being frozen is a problem that is solved by its furry little hood and the fur covering of its 'scape,' as the leafless flower stem is called. At first we see only the old brown leaves from last year, but soon the fresh young leaves uncurl and open. And then the little

flower-buds bravely cast aside their furs and come out in their dainty dresses, which vary from white to pink, and through all the shades of lavender to deep blue and purple. Each flower is made up of from six to twelve *sepals*, or divisions, if you please, of the flower-cup or *calyx*, which look so much like petals that you will have to inspect them closely to see the difference. These sepals are in truth little leaves which Mother Nature has coloured and transformed to call attention to the hepatica nectar pantries. It will be well for you to remember their structure; for when you come to study botany you will often read of "petal-like calyxes" or "sepals coloured like a corolla," and you will then know all about what is meant.

Sometimes sweet-scented hepaticas are found. Some folks say that all the blooms are fragrant at a certain time. Burroughs, however, tells us that "The gift seems as capricious as the gift of genius in families. You cannot tell which the fragrant ones are till you try them. Sometimes it is the large white ones, sometimes the large purple ones, sometimes the small pink ones." The odour is faint, like that of sweet violets, and, however it be, lucky is the one who chances upon a sweet-scented clump. Should such fortune come to you, mark the place, and see if the plant produces scented bloom next

year; by so doing you may help to solve a much-debated question.

“The gem of the woods,” Burroughs calls this little firstling, and we feel with him that it has never been admired half enough. “What an individuality it has! No two clusters alike; all shades and sizes. . . . A solitary blue-purple one, fully expanded, and rising over the brown leaves or the green moss, its cluster of minute *anthers*¹ showing like a group of pale stars on its little *firmament*,² is enough to arrest and hold the dullest eye.”

¹ Anthers = pollen knobs.

² Firmament or filament = threads on which anthers are hung.

LEGENDS OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT

When to the flowers so beautiful
The Father gave a name,
Back came a little blue-eyed one,
All timidly it came,
And standing at its Father's feet,
And gazing into His face,
It said in low and trembling tones,
And with a modest grace,
"Dear God, the name Thou gavest me,
Alas, I have forgot."
The Father kindly looked Him down,
And said, "Forget-me-not."

ANON.

THE forget-me-not is a native of Europe and Asia, but it has been naturalized freely over America, escaping from the gardens in both the Old World and the New to wander along brook-sides, marshes, and low meadows, while in Alaska it has settled so thickly on the hillsides as to give them a bluish tint from a distance. The grandest species of all the clan is a rich dark blue beauty growing wild in the Azores. This specimen has been transplanted in England, but it needs the protection of the greenhouse. Scorpion grass or mouse's ear is the name given to the smallest

member of the tribe, whose stems and leaves are covered with bristly hairs. The flowers of this forget-me-not form a lengthening stem, leaving their little empty green calices behind as they wither.

According to Blanchan, "It was the golden ring round the forget-me-not's centre that first led botanists to believe that the conspicuous markings at the entrance of many flowers served as pathfinders to insects. This golden circle also shelters the nectar from rain, and indicates to the fly or bee just where it must probe between stigma and anthers to touch them with opposite sides of its tongue. Since it may probe from any point in the circle, it is quite likely that the side of the tongue that touched a pollen-laden anther in one flower will touch the stigma of the next one visited, and so cross-fertilize it." The forget-me-nots, however, are not entirely dependent upon insects to set their seed. When these fail, the perfect flowers are able to attend to this matter themselves.

Botanists will tell you that the forget-me-not belongs to the Borage family, a small family of value to chemists in the preparation of perfume and dye-stuffs, and to druggists for their medicinal qualities.

There are almost as many legends of the forget-me-not as there are different types of and names for the plant. But although in all climes this dainty blossom of heaven's own true blue is considered an

emblem of friendship, many of the legends, alas! in striving to account for the name 'forget-me-not' have connected it with sorrow. One of the best known of these, perhaps, is that of the knight and his lady fair who were walking along the banks of the Danube, when the lady saw far below them a bunch of beautiful flowers. In delight she exclaimed over them, wishing she had the beautiful blue blossoms to plant in her own garden. Of course, though the bank was steep and the descent perilous, the lover, as became a true knight, at once went down to get them. Unfortunately a sapling gave way in his hand, and he and the prized bunch of blue rolled into the river. Clad in mail as he was, the knight was powerless to save himself, and when he found that he must perish, with a great effort he threw the flowers up to his beloved, calling at the same time "Forget-me-not!"

It is said that after the battle of Waterloo a great quantity of forget-me-nots sprang up upon the battlefield, as if to ask that the fallen heroes should not be forgotten.

An old Danish myth typified one brilliant, seldom-found species of the forget-me-not as a wondrous key-flower which unlocked a door in the mountain-side for the lucky one who picked it. This door led into a cave filled with sparkling gems—diamonds, rubies, amethysts, emeralds, sapphires, topazes,



"TAKE WHAT YOU WANT, FRIEND!"

turquoises, all surpassingly lovely and glittering most temptingly in the light of flaming rushes held by a little kobold in a red cap.

"Take what you want," the old fellow would cry pleasantly when the guest exclaimed in wonder and delight at the treasures. "Take what you want, friend, but don't forget the best!"

Straightway, of course, the shepherd, or perchance some traveller who had never in all his life heard of the key-flower, would select this stone and that, choosing always the largest and most brilliant, until his pockets, his hat, his handkerchief, and even his shoes and other parts of his wearing apparel had been filled to the limit, and he was so loaded down with the valuables that he could scarcely stagger under their weight. When at length the visitor was obliged to turn away he did so most unwillingly, for there was the kobold at his elbow, urging repeatedly: "Take all you want, friend, but don't forget the best!"

Indeed, so anxious was the old fellow that his guest should make the best possible choice that his cry, "Don't forget the best! Don't forget the best!" would follow him up the passage, and the door would close on the words!

And then the guest, to his dismay, would find that he had in truth failed to heed the oft-repeated advice. He had forgotten the best! He had left behind him the wondrous blue key-flower, and

without its magic his treasures were as nothing; they were now only so many pebbles and bits of moss and dead leaves—relics of his own greed.

The sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

So wrote Tennyson. It is a happy thought, which calls to mind a legend told by one of the old Persian poets:

It seems that in the golden morning of the early world an angel sat weeping outside the closed gates of Paradise. Alas! he had fallen from his high estate through loving a daughter of earth, and never more should he enter the Celestial City, unless, perchance, the maid he loved should become immortal!

So great was his sorrow and despair at what seemed an utter impossibility that presently the angel's sobs moved the Keeper of the Gate to pity. "What now, knight of the erring!" he chided gently. "Why sit ye there? Arise and redeem thy sin!"

A wise message truly.

But where to begin the angel did not know. Surely no act of his could lift to heaven his sweet queen of the flowers! And he turned to gaze, as he had so often, at the fair maid sitting afar beside a meadow-stream, plaiting her golden hair with wondrous blue blossoms, and singing so sweetly to herself that even the ear of Israfil must have harkened.

Then, as he watched enraptured, behold! a shaft

of purest golden light sprang like an arrow from the throne of Mithras and rested gently and lovingly upon the fair blossoms and the maid in their midst. And the angel's problem was solved!

Swifter than a shaft of light he went to earth, where shortly he and the maiden set forth together hand in hand, each bearing a great basket of beautiful plants which they had dug from the meadow. Hither and thither they went throughout the world, up hill and down dale, over pasture and field, pausing in sunny nooks and out-of-the-way places to set out little clumps of the wondrous flower. Then, their task ended, smilingly they presented themselves before the Keeper of the Gate.

And lo! they were admitted. The fair maid, without tasting the bitterness of death, had become immortal for her sweet service in growing the lovely blossoms of heaven's own blue—the forget-me-not—and in sharing them so generously with mankind everywhere.

Who knows, perhaps it may have been the efforts of these two that set the forget-me-nots in the heavens? You know the poet Longfellow tells us in *Evangeline* that

Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.

THE CARDINAL FLOWER

ONCE upon a time, so Indian legends say, there was a moody young warrior whom we will call Cloud-in-the-Face. This was not his real name, you understand, and 'cloud-in-the-face' was not his character until the unlucky day when the Great Spirit claimed the soul of the beautiful Indian princess who was soon to have been his bride. Then sorrow changed the heart, the name, and the blood of the young warrior.

How was he to live without his peerless maiden? Moreover, how could he go through the world seeing others of her age happy, laughing, and gay, while she, who was a thousand times more joyous and beautiful than they, was now silent and still for ever?

Crazed and maddened he caught up his bow and quiver and rushed into the forest. Here, after wandering for hours and hours, he at length sank to sleep beside a stream. Presently a bevy of Indian maidens, from a camp that knew not of the young warrior's sorrow, came to the edge of the river, and paused there making merry, all unmindful of the young brave's presence.

How that sweet young laughter jangled on the overwrought nerves of the young man! What

quivers the happy voices sent through that agonized heart! Suddenly, with a long wailing whoop of despair, he rose savagely to his knees, and began shooting his arrows with deadly aim into the careless, light-hearted group!

One after another the most beautiful of the maidens fell, and their life-blood stained the earth about them. And there, in that very spot, not many moons afterward, rose a clump of cardinal flowers, one for each maiden slain; none who saw them could doubt that the blood of those murdered Indian maidens lived again in the rich hues of the gorgeous blossoms.

The cardinal flower belongs to the lobelia family, being in truth the red lobelia. Strangely enough, too, all its kindred bear the bluest of blue blossoms. Now, why? Botanists tell us that it is simply for advertisement. Blue, it has been proved over and over again, is the favourite colour of the bees, and the blue-hued, short-tubed lobelias depend on the good offices of the bees to set their seed. The red lobelias have long tubes, and the bees are of little use to them. They must bid for the favour of the birds, and those who are familiar with the humming-bird know how red flowers call him. They have seen him time and again sipping thirstily, yet daintily, poised over the trumpet-flowers, the cannas, gladioli, and other long-tubed garden flowers.

The lobelias received their name from no less a personage than Linnæus himself—the greatest and most renowned of all botanists—who chose to christen them in honour of his friend Matthias de l’Obel, herbalist and physician to King James I.

By the way, have you ever wondered why the scientific names of flowers are such ‘jaw-breakers’ and why they are always in Latin? Answering the last question first, there are a great many different languages, you know, and as the scholars of all nations study Latin, it was thought best to put the classification names not only of plants, but of animals and minerals, in a language which all understand. Thus, you see, the names in these three kingdoms are alike all over the world, and it is much more convenient than you might have thought.

As to the *length* of the names, we are indebted to Linnæus for that, and it also is much more of a blessing than it seems. Up to the time of Linnæus botanists had more or less named plants and grouped them together, but a beginning had scarcely been made in classification. The learned men had a general name for various families, but they had not yet hit upon descriptive names for the different species. For example, *Viola* meant a plant of the violet family, but the identification of any particular individual required a lengthy description of it. “Why not give a second name to qualify the first?” suggested

Linnæus, and he gave as an example *Viola odorata*, which means, of course, the sweet-scented or English violet. The idea seemed most happy, and thereby was laid the foundation of the 'jaw-breakers.' And really they are not so terrible after all, once you know them! They remind one of the lions that frightened the traveller because, at a distance, he could not see that they were merely *iron* lions.

Certainly, if these names were not too hard for Linnæus they are not too hard for you and me. For, do you know, not much more than two hundred years ago the great botanist was just simply little Carl, the barefooted out-at-elbows son of a poor Swedish clergyman, who came near binding the youth at the age of eighteen or nineteen to learn the shoemaker's trade because he thought that he did not have brains enough to make a scholar!

Thanks to the interference of a kind friend, a physician, Carl was prevented from becoming a shoemaker. When he was twenty-one years old he became a student in the University of Upsala, trying to pay his way, as poor students were not too proud to do in those days, by working in his spare time. His father was able to help him only to the extent of a gift of eight pounds. But he was not discouraged, and when his old shoes were badly worn he put folded paper into the soles to keep out the damp and cold.

Later he went to Holland, and there made friends with a rich banker who was a botanist, and who became interested in the young Swede. Carl had been attracted to botany ever since his boyhood, and he was now given the definite purpose which has made the name 'Carl Linnæus' famous in the history of the science of botany.

THE POT OF GOLD

OF course you have heard many times over of the pot of gold hidden at the end of the rainbow, but did you know that this self-same pot had been really and truly discovered? It all happened years and years ago, and must be rather disturbing to those people who argue that the rainbow has no end.

This is how it happened:

It seems that a very, very selfish man was once crossing a meadow alone one bright moonlight night; suddenly, just how he never knew, his foot tripped over something which rolled on clinking a little way ahead of him, and behold! it was a pot of gold. It was the very pot of gold that lay at the foot of the rainbow he felt sure; for had he not that very afternoon seen one end of the rainbow arch resting on this self-same meadow?

Delighted with his find, the miser, for such he was, determined to hide the precious pot and its gleaming contents where no one could ever steal it from him. So he slipped it into the sack which he carried on his arm, and hurried away to the woods to secrete it in a hiding-place known only to himself.

But there was a hole in the sack, and the selfish old fellow did not know that as he went the gold pieces dropped one by one from the pot into the meadow. How disappointed he was when he discovered his loss! And how quickly he hurried back to recover the treasure!

He had no difficulty in finding the pieces, but imagine his feelings when on stooping to pick them up he found yellow flowers instead of golden coins! How did it happen?

Let the wise answer. We know only that the yellow buttercups give joy to all who pick them, and that selfish people never find joy or happiness anywhere.

THE BUTTERCUP DAIRYMAIDS

The little ladies of the churn,
They toil the spring-time through,
A-churning golden butter from
The rain and sun and dew.

But when the merry June-time comes,
Their labour all is done,
And they pack their tiny butter-bowls
With butter like the sun,

And then they stand in ranks and rows,
Their bowls upon their heads,
A-waiting the inspectors, who
Shall soon go through the meads.

And when the child inspectors come,
Such fun as then begins !
For they test that golden butter
With their rosy dimpled chins.

ANON.

How many different kinds of buttercups do you know?

We once read of an old gentleman who announced with no little pride that he had fourteen different kinds of buttercups growing on his farm! Until he was fifty years old this farmer knew almost nothing about plants. Then he made up his mind that he would really know what was growing on his own land. So he bought books and began to study, and in due time he was on speaking terms with a whole host of flowers, grasses and weeds. But he had by no means exhausted his subject! "Oh," said he, "how many times I have wished that I had begun to study plants when I was a child, but I am getting more enjoyment from them now than I can say!"

The buttercup is a native of Europe, but it has found its way to the meadows, grassy fields, and roadsides of North America. Nothing is prettier than a gold-starred field of buttercups to the beauty-loving eye; and nothing rouses the ire of the farmer more than the sight of them thickly dotted over his pastures. Cattle will not eat

buttercups. Full well they know what the child who puts the stem or leaves into his mouth finds out to his sorrow. Beggars, it is said, often use the juice of the plant to raise sorry-looking blisters on their skin.

The buttercup belongs to the Crowfoot family—*Ranunculaceæ* is its scientific name, and there is one species at least which certainly justifies the beginning of this—*rana*, a frog; this is the yellow water-buttercup. Perhaps you may have seen it fully immersed in water, or stranded at the edge of a pond in the mud. It has two sets of leaves, one for under-water existence, the other for land; so that, come what may, it is prepared. Often the stem of this species is several feet in length, and it makes itself doubly secure by rooting at the joints wherever it can.

Another interesting plant, which only the botanist would connect with the moisture-loving *Ranunculaceæ*, which delight in marshes and low meadow-lands, is the white water-crowfoot, with its fine thread-like leaves stretching here and there under water in the daintiest possible patterns. "The flowers of this species," says Blanchan, "must, like the whale, come up to blow! . . . These are small, white, or only yellow at the base, where each petal bears a spot or little pit that serves as a pathfinder to the flies. When the water rises unusually high,

the blossoms never open, but remain submerged, and fertilize themselves."

First to come in the spring is *R. bulbosus*. Let us see if we cannot discover the flower meant by this term, even though we haven't any knowledge of Latin. The first word, or initial as it is usually written, refers of course to the family name. And this we already know is buttercup in plain English. *Bulbosus* you would suspect to mean bulbous, wouldn't you? And now we have it: *Ranunculaceæ bulbosus*=bulbous buttercup. Simple enough, after all, isn't it?

Moreover, using our common sense a little further, we can easily determine why this species is the first buttercup to bloom. Naturally, having its nourishment thriftily stored up all the winter in its underground bulb, it can push to the front much more rapidly than its fibre-rooted kin who must first gather their materials from the soil and the air. This buttercup is a low and generally more hairy plant than the tall crowfoot, which is the common meadow-buttercup, but, like it, it is thoroughly at home in most parts of the country. Other names for the common meadow-buttercup are gold-cup, butter-flower, blister-plant, and cuckoo-flower.

Cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.

How well we all know this! Among the golden multitude perchance may be others of their kin

less common. Here are a few species whose acquaintance you should try to make: the goldilocks, the water-buttercup, the celery-leaved crowfoot, the great spearwort, and the lesser spearwort, which flecks the marshes throughout the season with its small golden flowers.

MY LADY CLOVER

Though the brown bee's a rover,
 Seeking ever for sweetness new,
To the little Lady Clover
 He in his heart of hearts is true.
"Sweet! Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!"
 He hums it over and over.
"Where in the wide world will you meet
 With the likes of my Lady Clover?
Pink she is, white she is,
A little thing of delight she is!
Sweet! Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!"
 He hums as he sways above her,
"Nowhere at all do I ever meet
 With the like of my Lady Clover."

ANON.

AND, indeed, neither does man! Especially if he looks at the plant as an example of industry. Then, too, everybody knows that the clover is a witch. Does not good luck always follow the finding of a four-leaf clover? And who doubts but that a five- or seven-leaf specimen is a forerunner of bad news? Peasants say that to dream of the clover foretells not only a happy marriage, but long life and prosperity. 'Living in clover' is a happy expression that has come to mean that a person has every luxury. We might study

clovers for weeks and weeks and then not half appreciate their worth and beauty.

No plant is of more value to the farmer than the clover; or indeed to all mankind, for what benefits the farmer benefits all. Chief of its uses perhaps, and one which you might not think of if you were asked to name them, is its value as a means of enriching the soil. The clover is a *legume*, you know, cousin to the garden and stock peas, and to the alfalfa. It has on its roots little tubercles or nodules, which are no more nor less than little plant storehouses, whose business it is to store up the nitrogen which the plant gathers from the air. When clover is planted as a 'cover crop' and turned under to enrich the soil, these little nodules release their nitrogen, which mixes with the earth to form nitrates, and in this form the nourishment is easily taken up and used by whatever crop may be sown to reap the richness. Fruit-growers commonly sow clover in the autumn and turn under the crop the following spring that the fruit-trees may feed from this valuable source of fertility. In addition to their power of storing nitrogen, clovers by reason of their deep and spreading root systems make the best possible green manures for adding *humus*—vegetable matter—to the soil. Crimson clover is the one most often used for 'cover crops.'

Though the clovers of all kinds are a delight to the bees, the honey-bee, who really 'lives in clover,'

chooses a white clover-field. By the way, did you ever sit at a safe distance and watch one of these busy workers through an opera-glass? In the lens the clover blooms become a collection of little white-tubed honey-jars, which the bees, standing on their heads, empty with marvellous quickness. Each knows to a nicety when enough has been gathered, and loses not an instant in darting off to the hive in a 'bee-line,' straight and true as a line in a geometrical drawing. Indeed, these little artisans are master hands at lines and exact patterns. Where is the pencil and rule that could draw a six-sided box straighter and truer than the hexagon cells into which the honey is stored?

The white clover, or shamrock, is the national flower of Ireland; it claims an equal place in history with England's rose and Scotland's thistle, and is the emblem of promise. It is said that if soil is ploughed and strewed with lime white clover will spring up in abundance, giving the promise of future bounteous crops.

The happy hunting-ground of the bumble-bees is the farmer's red clover-field. And that they do invaluable service there is proved by the experience of the Australians, who imported quantities of clover seed, and had glorious fields of it the first season. But not a single seed was set, for the bumble-bees who attend to the distribution of

the pollen had been left behind! The following year the experiment was again tried, and the bumble-bees were not forgotten, with the result that clover was a success in its new home.

Does any of the bumble-bee's delight in his wondrous pasture come from pleasure in the service he performs? Not at all: indeed it is doubtful if he knows the good that he does. His happiness lies in the knowledge that none but the butterfly's long tongue can share the plentiful feast that is spread; so he booms lazily about and takes his time to sip the honey from each brimming floret. Perchance, it might be better if he did realize his importance, and hurried a little at the task! For the butterflies are doubtful visitors, if not actually injurious. Their long slender tongues sip up the nectar, barely touching the pollen which waits to be spread; and some of the tribe, alas! nip holes at the base of the honey tube, and so leave the plant a prey to the gall-making beetle and the cutworm.

Besides multitudes of sulphur butterflies, the 'dusky wings' and various others of the *Lepidoptera* and their caterpillars feast upon the clovers. Indeed, a botanist, keeping count of the insect visitors to a certain red clover plant, found that thirteen out of twenty of the comers were butterflies!

Clovers have showcards or signs that the insects read most plainly. Right well does the little busy

bee know which florets contain nectar, and which are done for. And so may you also, if you but read as he does, for the moment a floret has been drained of its nectar and the seed set, the seed-vessel closes over and the floret turns brown and hangs downward. 'No visiting in business hours' this brown signal says, and the bee promptly alights on a fresh erect floret that is ready not only to welcome him, but to reward him richly for taking the trouble to call. When all its florets have been fertilized, the head stands brown and crumpled, endeavouring to look as discouraging as possible to such enemies as might suspect the presence of the little green seed-treasures, and feast upon them. Usually two, rarely three or four, seeds form in a seed-pod.

How many of the clover family can you name at sight? And have you ever by chance visited a clover-field after nightfall to see how the plant puts her leaves to bed?

THE PROUD POPPY AND THE LITTLE BLUE CORNFLOWER

ACCORDING to an old legend, there was once upon a time a maiden called Papava. But though she was the daughter of a king and very beautiful, she was not what such a gifted little lady should have been. She was selfish and wilful, and her great black eyes were wont to snap stormily, and her richly shod little feet that should have danced about happily all day stamp angrily because things did not fully satisfy. Try as they might none could please her, not even her worshipful parents, who were continually bringing her some new and wonderful gift.

Such beautiful things as the little princess had! Every morning her raven locks were combed with a glistening jewel-studded comb; her breakfast was served on a golden tray; her dishes were of solid silver and the most beautiful sparkling crystal. No child ever had more marvellous toys, and her dresses were beautiful dreams. Red was the colour Papava liked best, because it set off her black curls and olive skin to the best advantage. So most of her silks and velvets—she would wear nothing else—were of the richest and most glowing shades. Even

her night-robe was of the heaviest, deepest-pile wine-red velvet, trimmed with a golden cord and solid gold buttons.

Because of her ill-temper and disagreeable ways, Papava had no little friends of her own. Indeed, she did not think there was any one in all the realm good enough to associate with her. "I am the king's daughter," she would say haughtily, and her tone added, "*Who* are you?"

So none of the royal parents' friends—and they were many—loved their little daughter. "She is a disobedient, ungrateful child," they said, "who can never bring anything but sorrow to the realm."

Her nurse and the good queen's maid agreed over their tea-cups that they would like to whip the child soundly. "Only," added the nurse wisely, "it would be energy wasted! What Papava needs is to be sent away where she would be treated like common folks. It is ill for a child to have her own way in all things, whether she be the daughter of a king or of a peasant."

"And Papava does not even know her own mind!" the queen's maid added. "Never in all the world was there a more changeful, troublesome, impulsive child!"

So you see there was bad work for somebody to undo, and it was small wonder that here and there among those who loved the king and queen were some



HER DRESSES WERE BEAUTIFUL DREAMS

whose heads shook sorrowfully as they wondered how it was all to end.

Chief among those who had to bear the brunt of Papava's ill-nature was her own little waiting-maid, a child so sweet and sunny and so evenly balanced that not all Papava's disagreeable ways could disturb her. And it was well, agreed the king's household, for none else could stand what Little Blue Corny had to put up with.

"Little Blue Corny!" you exclaim. "A strange name for a sweet maid!"

And yet one very appropriate, as most nicknames are, when you know the whole circumstances.

Cornelia was the little maid's name—a name altogether too high-sounding and large for her cheerful, humble little person. Blue were her eyes as the summer sky, and blue always was her dress; so what better than 'Little Blue Corny,' spoken always in a tone of affection? For no one could look upon the child without feeling his heart grow lighter, and more than once was voiced the thought: "Ah, if *she* could only have been the king's daughter!"

Strangely enough, however, the witches and fairies of those days failed to see what would have been a happy solution of the court problem, and so Papava went on to her fate.

"Let us go into the cornfields!" she commanded

haughtily one day, her eye having been attracted by the scene of the reapers at work in the wheat. And Little Blue Corny bowed submissively, as became a humble waiting-maid, though well she knew it was no place for the proud daughter of the king.

Forth they went at once through the palace gates, and the reapers, when they saw who was coming among them, removed their hats and bowed low before the princess. Papava, however, scorned to return their greeting: it was but meet that they should bow before the king's daughter, and she swept on with high head and mincing steps, her manner as unfitting to a child as was her rich, splendid apparel.

But not so Little Blue Corny, following respectfully after the princess, in her simple blue gown; right and left her smiles flashed happily upon her friends, and every now and then she had something pleasant to say to the honest workers who regarded her so kindly.

The different look on the faces of the reapers as they turned toward the maid might have shown the truth even to self-willed Papava, had she not been too haughty to turn her head! But no, straight on down the long fields they went, and as they passed the various groups of workers the expressions on all faces were the same. Finally they came to the end of the fields, and the princess, looking about for some excuse for showing her

power, pointed suddenly to a small cloud which had that instant swept across the sun.

"It is going to rain," she cried shrilly. "Let a shelter be built for me at once!"

The men stared at one another in dismay. Their day's task was heavy, and the wheat was over-ripe. It needed to be handled with care and gathered into sheaves without delay. For alas! not a grain must be wasted. There were many mouths to feed, and bread would be scarce at best. What should they do?

"Obey me at once," stormed the princess, stamping her foot at their hesitation, and sweeping them with a glance that would have slain could glances kill. "At once! Build me a shelter with your sheaves! The rain must not touch me!"

Plainly enough her tone added, "For I am the princess," and the men knew they dared not disobey. But to use the precious sheaves which could ill stand handling! It was wanton waste and madness. And still they hesitated.

Old Franc, a man who had long served and revered the king, advanced and bent humbly. "See, my princess," he said, pointing to the cloud which was even then sweeping away, "it is not going to rain. Not even one drop will fall! And we dare not waste the sheaves! Bread is scarce, and our people will have much ado to get through the winter!"

“Silence!” commanded Papava, her foot again striking the stubble, and her anger rising. Who were these labourers that they dared put the needs of the people before the wishes of the king’s daughter? “I will have shelter,” she insisted. “Build me a hut at once of your sheaves, or leave the service of the king, my father, for ever!”

Sullenly the men obeyed, while the princess stood haughtily by, and Little Blue Corny pressed her apron to her moist eyes to shut out the vision of poor women and children who must know cruel want for those wasting grains that slipped from the ripened sheaves as the hut took shape.

At last all was done: sheaves for the floor, sheaves for the walls, sheaves for the roof—precious sheaves which cried in low mournful plaint, “*Bread, bread, BREAD!*”

And Papava, though she knew full well that she was wickedly and woefully in the wrong, turned a deaf ear. “Come!” she said sharply to her waiting-maid, and drew sorrowing Little Blue Corny into the hut beside her.

Instantly there was a blinding flash, which seemed to the men to come from heaven’s own blue—certain it was that the little cloud had long since vanished; and in a twinkling the house of sheaves was in snapping, crackling flames over the heads of the haughty princess and her patient maid!

So fierce and terrible was the heat that the reapers could only stand awestruck and paralysed to the very marrow with fear. Alas! the headstrong, wilful Papava, the precious sheaves, and dear Little Blue Corny! All was over almost in an instant. Bareheaded and in silence the men stood about the blackened, charred heap, until at length old Franc spoke aloud the thought of all. "It was the judgment of the great God!" he said solemnly, and turned away to the palace to carry the sad tidings to the good king and queen.

The following summer, when once again the golden ears stood tall and straight in the king's cornfields, lo! there sprang from the site of the charred heap two flowers that were utterly unlike one another: one was a flaunting, rich red beauty, the other was a modest little blue flower of wondrous loveliness.

"Haughty Papava and Little Blue Corny!" whispered the beholders in awed voices. For most surely did these flowers, springing from the ashes of the children, typify the character of each.

Sin and innocence! Cruel pride and loving kindness! Rich red poppy and little blue cornflower!

So we see them in the gardens to-day.

A LEGEND OF THE IRIS

PRINCESS IRIS was the favourite attendant and messenger of Juno, the queen of heaven. She it was who always went to the bedside of the dying as messenger of peace and promise to bear away the departing spirit. The ancients pictured her with wings and encircled by a rainbow, for the rainbow was the magic bridge fashioned by Juno on which the maiden came to earth, and over which none but she ever travelled. Red and purple clouds were her wrappings, and her golden chariot was drawn by two handsome peacocks, whose gorgeous tails spread out in the sun and shone like the colours in the rainbow itself.

Iris loved the waters of the earth, for in them she could always see the reflection of her own rainbow colours, and she never failed in passing to tarry awhile by the margin of a quiet lake or stream. One day it chanced that as she drifted idly to earth, shaking water-drops from the clouds for the pleasure of seeing them sparkle in the light, she saw far below her the shining waters of a lake, and at once directed her chariot thither.

Stepping out the moment her chariot touched the earth, she was charmed and delighted to find

some beautiful flowers growing close to the water, stately and tall. "As blue as the blue waters of the sea!" she cried happily, and bent admiringly above the blossoms, touching the petals here and there lovingly, all unheeding that her own rainbow drops were sprinkling the flowers.

No sooner had she passed on than some children came by. "Oh, look!" they cried, wonderingly. "See this blue lily, all shining with rainbow colours. Let us pick it for the Festival of the Flowers!"

Happy, happy children, as they bore their treasure to the place where the gardeners and flower-lovers were exhibiting their choicest blossoms.

"Where did this lovely thing come from?" cried the judges, deeply pleased. "What is it called?"

None knew. But one and all agreed that against its rich loveliness not a flower there could compete. Deep blue were its petals like the twilight sky, and as softly shaded as the cloudlets, while here and there richer tints flashed out like those of the rainbow when it is kissed by the sun.

"Iris!" someone cried. "The rainbow messenger! She is ever tarrying at the water's edge. Surely she has kissed this bloom! In her honour let the flower be named."

And so, to this day, the tall, lovely blue lily that grows by the water's edge, half hidden among

its own sword-like leaves, is called *iris*, in memory of Iris, the rainbow princess.

This beautiful flower has another name also, and one perhaps with which you are more familiar, for it is the name that our grandmothers gave it: *flower-de-luce*. A name that also is rich in honour, and dates back to the time of Louis the Seventh, the King of France. Having distinguished himself in the Second Crusade, the king desired, according to the custom of the time, to select a particular emblem. He therefore caused the iris to be emblazoned on the arms of France, and it thus became the 'flower of Louis.' Ages passed, 'Louis' became shortened to 'Luce,' and this lovely species of the lily became the *flower-de-luce*, the typical flower of chivalry, which has, as Ruskin pointed out, "a sword for its leaf and a lily for a heart."

LOTUS BLOSSOMS

HAVE you ever seen lotus blossoms? How marvellous they are, like golden plates, measuring from four to ten inches across, floating on the surface of lakes, slow streams, and ponds! They are similar in appearance to the sweet-scented water-lily of North America, but their petals are yellow, there are fewer of them, and they centre in a host of stamens. The great round ribbed leaves, smooth above, and lined with hairs below, are kept floating by means of great air canals, which run through both leaf and flower stalks. How truly wonderful it is that roots embedded deep in mud and slime can send up flowers of such sweetness and purity! And what a silent sermon is here preached for man!

Small wonder that the ancient Egyptians, and many millions in India, Persia, China, and Japan, have bowed their heads in adoration of the lotus. The Egyptians dedicated their species, the sacred lotus, to the sun-god, and looked upon it as an emblem of the creation of the world from water. This explains why, in pictures of Egyptian art, the lotus blossoms always stand up so grandly, high above the people and animals that share the picture. From

the centre of the lotus bloom came forth Brahma, the great Hindu creator of the universe; likewise, too, Buddha, founder of the Buddhist religion, whose symbol is the lotus, appeared floating on this mystic flower.

The flat-topped seed-vessel of the lotus ripens above the water, and in this are stored little round nuts, which the water birds love to pick out and enjoy, and some of which they drop in various places where the seedlings will have a chance to grow. In various foreign lands the natives eat both nuts and root of the different species of lotus; and one particular kind of the nut was held by the early peoples to possess some very wonderful properties. This nut had the flavour of ripened dates, and its effect on the homesick wanderer was most marvellous. Whosoever ate of it on a foreign shore at once forgot his native land, his family, and his friends, and was content to dwell for ever among the strangers about him!

In his story of the wanderings of Ulysses Homer records the narrow escape of the hero and his crew in the land of the Lotus-eaters—a people whose sole food consisted of the lotus. Briefly the tale runs as follows:

Ulysses, King of Ithaca, went up against Troy, and having at length taken and sacked the city, he left, with his companions, to return home. Fortune,

however, now turned against him. The next rich city he attacked repulsed him and his men with great slaughter. As the ships put out to sea a hurricane arose, storm-clouds blotted out the stars so that the pilots could not hold to their course, and, buffeted by wind and wave, the king's vessels, with broken masts and torn sails, drifted aimlessly, anchoring at last on the fateful shore of the Lotophagi.

There Ulysses dispatched three men ashore to seek aid. These men, however, failed to return, and at length the king, in deepest anxiety, made up a party and went in search of them, expecting to find them imprisoned, if not eaten, by cannibals. Imagine then his surprise when, having gone a short distance, he came upon a jolly party, laughing and feasting beneath the trees, and in their midst, more merry and boisterous than their hosts, the three men whom he had sent for help. Justly wroth, Ulysses called their names sharply, but to his further indignation the three paid him no more attention than if he had never been their leader. Indeed, to all appearance, they looked upon him and their comrades with him as curiously as did the stranger hosts!

"Surely," thought Ulysses to himself, "there is something strange in all this!"

And he advanced with caution.

His hosts, however, came eagerly to meet him,

and extended the warmest welcome. "We have not much to offer you in the way of meat and drink," they said, "as we live entirely upon the fruit of the lotus. But it satisfies us abundantly, and doubtless you too will find that it supplies all that you require."

So saying they offered a great basket of the tempting fare.

But Ulysses waved it aside. In sharp tones he forbade his followers to eat of the nuts on penalty of death, and he ordered, "To the ship without delay!" At the same time he signed to the three scouts whom he had sent out to follow. Instead of obeying, however, these men shrugged their shoulders, and reached again for the delicious food.

Greatly excited and indignant, fearful of the mutiny and rebellion he read in the faces of his crew, Ulysses at once called to him six of his strongest, most trusted men. "Seize these deserters," he said sternly, "and to the ship every one of you; there is magic in this tempting lotus food! Look sharp, men, as you value the life and happiness of your wives and little ones!"

His decision and promptness had the desired effect; instantly the crew rallied about him; the deserters were dragged protesting away, and soon the disabled Grecian ships were out in the bay, bound whither they knew not, but anywhere to

escape the dreadful fate which Ulysses knew had all but clutched them.

As for the three men who had been minded to stay in the realm of the Lotus-eaters, no sooner had that land disappeared from view than the magic of the direful food loosed its hold, and when they realized what had so nearly befallen them they gathered about their brave leader and thanked him with trembling voices and misty eyes for the strong action which had saved them from being traitors to home and friends.

THE ANEMONE

Wind-flower, wind-flower, why are you here?
This is a boisterous time of the year
For blossoms as fragile and tender as you
To be out on the roadsides, in spring raiment new.
The snow-flakes yet flutter abroad on the air,
And the sleet and the tempest are weary to bear.
Have you not come here, pale darling, too soon?
You would seem more at home with the blossoms in June.

LUCY LARCOM

AND what, think you, was the wind-flower's answer? "Why have I come here? Why," she said, "perhaps to show you that the strong may be sometimes the delicate too!"

We need only go back to the origin of the wind-flower to believe this word for word. You know that long ago the earth was far from being the safe place to dwell upon that it is now. There used to be many roaming wild beasts that killed people and destroyed the crops. The brave men in those days were mighty hunters, and sometimes for days and days parties scoured the woods to destroy wild beasts.

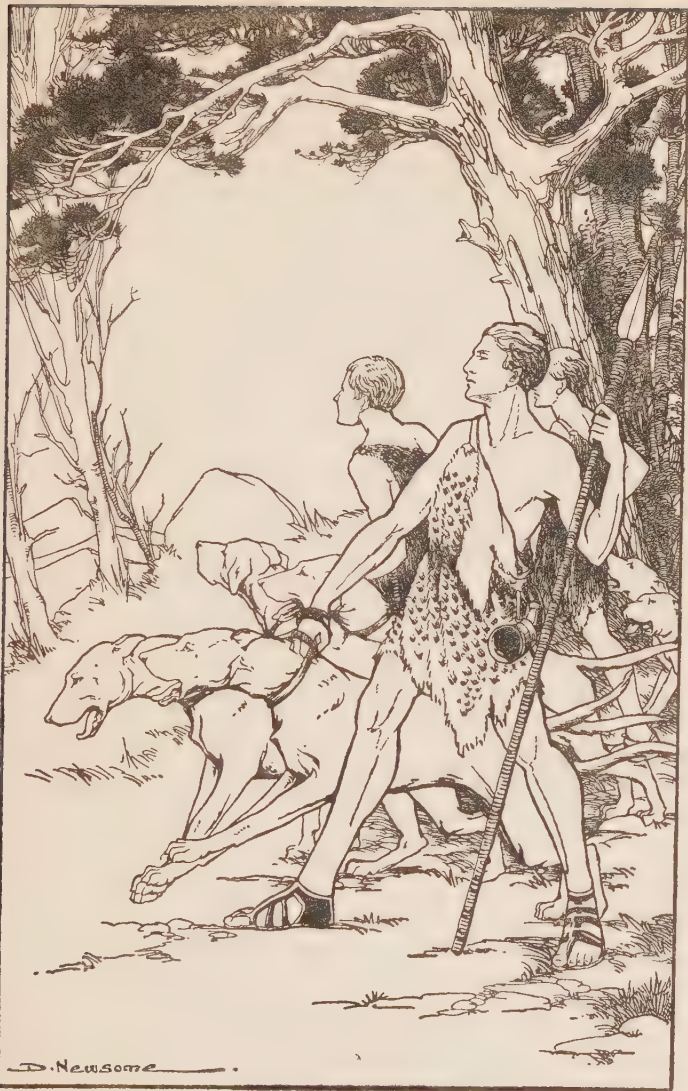
Among these mighty men who so often covered themselves with glory was a certain youth called Adonis, to whom no danger was too great, no

hardship too severe, for his courage to endure. Seeing that he was reckless in exposing himself, the goddess Venus, who loved him, made haste to urge a warning. "Be brave, my lad," she said, "when you meet the timid, but do not oppose your courage to the courageous. Do not attack the beasts that Nature has armed with weapons. Think of their terrible horns and claws and teeth! What honour will it be to you if you lose your life in their destruction? Beware how you expose yourself to danger!"

Adonis, however, only laughed at her fears, and waved to her gaily as she entered her chariot and was borne swiftly away by her graceful white swans.

The next moment he was attracted by the loud barking of his dogs, and seeing that they had roused a wild boar from its lair, he instantly gave chase, notwithstanding that it was one of the fiercest and most vicious of the dreaded beasts, and that he was unarmed but for his spear.

Away through the forest they went headlong, and presently Adonis, pressing an advantage, hurled his spear and wounded the animal so that it was driven into a frenzy of pain and rage. Gnawing at the weapon fixed in its side, the creature managed to extract the rankling thing and then flew at its enemy in a passion of fury. Adonis perforce took



D. Newsome .

BRAVE MEN IN THOSE DAYS WERE MIGHTY HUNTERS

to his heels and ran as fast as he could, but alas! the boar gained on him at every bound, and shortly the youth was overcome and left, gored and terribly mutilated by the creature's tusks, dying alone in an open stretch in the woods.

And hither came Venus, attracted by his heart-rending groans. When she saw who it was that lay stretched there, and that nothing could be done, she cried out in great grief: "Oh, Adonis, my beloved, each spring you shall return to earth that all the world may delight in you and remember your prowess."

And so it happened that the next season, on the spot where Adonis had fallen, there sprang up a number of flowers, streaked here and there with red, the colour of blood.

It is said that the wind blows the blossoms open, and afterward blows the petals away; so the plant is called anemone or wind-flower. In China it is styled the 'death bloom,' and is much planted in graveyards. The old Romans always picked the first wind-flowers with solemnity and prayer, believing that due reverence of it would keep them safe from fever throughout the year. Even to this day, it is said, some peasants run past a colony of innocent wind-flowers with dread in their hearts, fairly holding their breath as they fly, for they think that the air about them is tainted with death.

According to another old Greek tradition, Anemos, the ruler of the winds, always sent these delicate star-like namesakes as harbingers of the rude and warlike gusts which were shortly to come from his island realms away in the seas, no one knew just where. Certain it is that the anemone is the 'child of the wind.' It is "fed and refreshed by the cold, rushing rains, and the storm rocks its cradle with lullabies wild." No blast, however fierce, can break its slender, pliable stem, as it trembles and bows in meek submission to its fate.

Pick the anemone and it is soon wilted and gone; dig it up carefully, keeping as much earth firm about the roots as possible, and it will bloom for many days in a pot on the window-sill, a delight to all beholders. It is then that we take time to observe the plant carefully. How beautiful is the background of pretty leaves whorled where they set off the lone flower to best advantage, and how dainty are its petals! Stay! *Are* they petals? No, indeed, we see now that this is another one of those economical plants that make shift to use their sepals as a show-card. Nor is it altogether dependent on insect visitors, for these are apt to be few in the windy days of early spring. As the blossoms nod on the stem, they are so arranged that the pollen may fall in such a fashion as to self-set the seed, in case none is brought in from the colony of wind-flowers round about.

The anemone is a member of the great Crowfoot family. How many of its cousins have we already mentioned, do you remember? Two species are commonly recognized — the rue-anemone, of the wind-swept hillsides, which is the most familiar species, and the wood or true anemone.

CLYTIE

A LEGEND OF THE SUNFLOWER

ONCE upon a time there was a beautiful woodland nymph named Clytie. Her hair was a lovely golden colour, just the shade of the cowslips and buttercups that grew in the meadows where she loved to roam. Her dress was green and so nearly matched the grass and the leaves that she was easily hidden among them.

Day after day Clytie sat among the swaying flowers, listening to the brook as it went murmuring happily along, but her eyes were neither for the beautiful blossoms nor the gleaming water. Her face was ever turned in adoration toward the sun, and how very, very much she wished that Apollo, the sun-god, would swoop down in his golden chariot and take her with him. What joy it would be to dart from out the rosy gates of dawn, upward and aloft, in that marvellous golden chariot drawn by the fiery steeds fed always on ambrosia, and guided by Apollo's strong arms and far-seeing eye! What fun to watch the moon and the stars slipping off to their beds, and to see the earth beginning to glow and kindle under Apollo's rays! Glorious Apollo, there was no love like his; if only he would but

come down to her! And so the foolish maiden sat ever with her face turned toward him, waiting and hoping for something that could never be.

Sometimes dark clouds veiled the sun-god, and then Clytie was sad and unhappy, and her face drooped. But, if the rain came suddenly, she would wave her arms and shout with glee, for she knew that soon Apollo's face would come peeping out. When the sun entered upon its downward course to the western horizon, and the shadows grew long, Clytie would rise with her arms full of the flowers that she had absently plucked, and hurry to the top of a high hill, stumbling sadly sometimes; for never for one moment did her eyes leave the fast disappearing chariot. Here, when Apollo had quite gone, she would stand staring at the clouds so long as their purple and pink and golden loveliness reflected his glory, then as quietly and sweetly as flowers go to sleep she would sink to rest upon the mossy earth.

Nor did she fail to rouse with the first twitter of the birds in the morning; Apollo's first glance over the shining rim of his chariot always discovered her standing waiting eagerly for him.

But bright Apollo did not care
To woo this tender dove.
From morn till eve she waited there
To catch one glance of love.

And at last so disappointed was the maid that she no longer roamed about in her usual happy way. For nine days she sat and tasted neither food nor drink, her own silly tears her only nourishment. Each morning at dawn she begged Apollo with her pleading eyes, and all day long as he followed his daily course she saw no other object. Why, oh! why, would he not come and take her with him? Wondrous, beautiful, golden Apollo!

“Bless the maid,” murmured the sun-god, more than once, knowing full well her foolish thoughts, “she is not immortal; she could not ride by my side! The fiery breath of my steeds would scorch her.”

At length he determined to ask Jupiter to interfere. Thus it was that one morning, as Clytie sat faint and weary, her eyes fixed upon Apollo in prayerful appeal, all suddenly her limbs took root in the moist soil and her sweet face became a flower, with golden curls a-flying. Straight and tall, the flower stood proudly on its stalk, with pale green leaves about it, and henceforth as Apollo moved slowly across the sky the flower face followed his golden chariot slowly from east to west. And so Clytie stands

. . . to-day as she stood then,
A sunflower, strong and bright;
A sign of constancy to men
Who sometimes scorn and slight.

It is a fanciful legend. But the belief that the sunflower turns always on its stem to face the sun is not strictly true. It is, however, a world-wide emblem of constancy. Thus Moore's lines:

The heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look that she turned when he rose.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

IN a grim old castle with thick walls and frowning towers, high up among the snow-capped Alpine peaks, a little girl lay ill. She was beloved not only in the castle but in the monastery below; for her sake the busy maids went about their Christmas preparations half-heartedly, and the monks came and went on errands of love. Father Celestine, famous for his skill in healing, knelt beside the little white bed and ministered to the child with tender care. An old shepherd from far down the valley came to bring his little friend a wooden lamb which he had patiently carved and painted. But even its startling black eyes and cherry lips failed to interest the patient. By and by she drifted off into a deep sleep. Monk and shepherd stole away on tiptoe, hoping that she would wake refreshed, and only the mother, the Lady Walpurga, watched beside her.

Presently the child started up with outstretched arms. "Look, mother, look!" she cried. "See the beautiful lady and the little children! See, she has given me roses, white roses!" Then she sank back, with closed eyes.

The poor mother was nearly frantic with grief.

"It is the beautiful angels of heaven," she sobbed, "and my darling will soon join them!" She fell on her knees and wept bitterly. Then a thought of Father Celestine came to her. Perhaps he might even yet administer some saving herb! She summoned the servants to send for him. But all had gone to Christmas Mass, except an old dame in the chimney-corner, who stayed to keep an eye on the pots and kettles.

Leaving this woman to watch the child, the mother herself set off down the mountain in great haste. The peaks were still tipped with rosy light, but in the valley Night had drawn her sable mantle. Into this gloom the heavy-hearted mother hurried, with no guide but the glimmering lights in the convent, and no sound to cheer her save the crunching snow.

Presently there appeared before her a long procession of misty figures. A tall beautiful woman in a long white cloak walked at its head, and following her came a troop of children, also dressed in long white cloaks. Walpurga quickly hid herself, and watched their sweet, serious faces with bated breath. At the very last came a little girl who seemed to have great difficulty in keeping up with the others. Her cloak was too long, and now and again she stumbled in a most distressing fashion. Walpurga was so sorry for her that she forgot her anxiety. She ran to the little one, and kneeling



IN A GRIM OLD CASTLE A LITTLE GIRL LAY ILL

down, pinned up the cloak out of harm's way, and brushed off the chilling snow.

As the mother rose to her feet the beautiful leader turned and smiled radiantly, then pointed slowly to the ground beside her. A merry peal from the convent bells rang over the snow, and the procession magically disappeared. Walpurga rubbed her eyes, as though to clear them of dreams, and advanced hesitatingly to the spot to which the lady had pointed. And lo! out of the ice and the snow she beheld standing a beautiful little bush, all covered with clustering green leaves and snow-white blossoms.

"The white roses of my little daughter's vision!" she cried delightedly. "Who knows what healing they may contain?"

Speedily plucking a few blossoms she hurried back, forgetting Father Celestine. Arrived at the castle she found the old shepherd in the act of giving a drink of goat's milk and the juice of juniper berries to the child. She gently pushed him aside and breathlessly placed the roses in the little trembling hands.

A low murmur of delight broke from the child. She buried her face happily in the roses and drew in deep breaths of their spicy odour. Presently she began to sneeze, and oh, how she sneezed! But soon it passed. "Water, give me water!" gasped the little one. The old shepherd held his

cup to her lips. She drank thirstily and sank back in a deep, natural sleep.

"The saints be praised!" cried the shepherd. "The fever has broken. My drink and the sneezing have saved her!"

"'Twas these blessed roses!" cried the Lady Walpurga, and with tears of joy glistening in her eyes, she told how she had found them.

Instantly the old shepherd bent to examine the blossoms, which until that moment he had scarcely heeded. "'Tis the Christmas rose — the sneezewort that only a few people have ever seen," he cried, excitedly. "Count the petals! See how many there are—more than a hundred, some folks say. As for the procession, it was none other than Frau Berchta, the White Witch, and her Little People," he declared solemnly. "'Tis lucky that you have a kind heart, my lady, for the good Frau wanders over the mountains from Christmas to Twelfth Night, 'tis said, blessing all whom she finds worthy. Rest assured, the child will live!"

As though confirming the blessed words, from the cloister below came the swelling sounds of the Christmas anthem: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,*" and the mother and the good shepherd bowed their heads, and stood with glad and happy hearts.

PIXIES AND TULIPS

IN Devonshire, not far from a marsh where the pixies used to hold their nightly revels, there lived an old woman who was very fond of flowers. Such a marvellous garden as she had! Even the king and queen when passing one day paused to admire her tulip bed. There was not its like in the whole country round. Such great deep-cupped, many-hued tulips as there were, and so sweet-scented that the air all about was heavy with their fragrance! The place was especially the joy and delight of the pixies, and after nightfall they might always be seen about the bed. And none but the old lady knew why: the tulips were such ideal pixie cradles that the pixie mothers delighted to put their babes to sleep there. Indeed, nothing could have been more convenient than this lovely nursery so close to the scene of their revels.

So, night after night, in the wee, small hours, there often drifted up to the old lady's room, close under the thatch, the strains of sweetest music. "'Tis fairy music," she would say happily. "Who could doubt it?" And her dreams would be filled with pleasing fancies in which she played the part of godmother to the pixies. But she never ventured

near the bed after nightfall for fear of frightening her guests away.

As for the tulips themselves, blessed and doubly blessed they were by their delighted visitors, and they grew to such size and of such matchless beauty that on no account would the good dame allow one to be picked.

Months went by, and finally the old lady was taken ill and died. Her son, a coarse, rough fellow who had always thought his mother wasted too much land upon her flowers, at once determined to plough up the tulip bed. "They are a useless weed," he said. "I shall grow mangels for the cattle in their stead."

And he was as good as his word. Before the old dame had been three days in her grave the tulips were gone, and in their place stretched a strip of blackest loam, all duly planted in the straightest possible rows.

"No good will come of it," said the neighbours, who knew how the old dame had prized her flowers, and one and all heard the mournful wail that swept through the valley that night. "'Tis the angered pixies," they agreed. "Bob might better have saved his seed."

And so it proved, for not a single spear of green thrust itself above ground.

"Bosh!" said the son, when he heard what

people were saying. "Pixies be hanged ! The seed was old ; I feared it would never sprout. I shall plant wheat."

This was done forthwith, but again the mournful wail rose and fell through the long night. And the people shook their heads. "'Tis no use," they said. "The pixies will never forgive the despoiling of their nursery." For on her death-bed the old lady had told the secret of the pixie cradles, begging that they should never be disturbed. And her son had promised. But he had not kept his word. "'Twas only a dying woman's whim," he said.

However, little good his broken promise did him : he had his work for nothing. For the ground remained black as when the soil was first turned, and never a sprig of green of any sort relieved its sombre surface.

But not so with the old dame's grave. Though no mortal tended it, the most wondrous tulips bloomed over and about it : proof positive that the pixies knew where their kind friend slept. Moreover, people passing that way late at night often heard strains of fairy music. "'Tis the pixie mothers putting their babes to sleep in the tulip cradles," they would say. "Hark to their silver-toned lullabies !"

LADY COLUMBINE

WHO would guess that the delicate anemone and hepatica are kin of the elegant and stylish-looking Lady Columbine? But then no one would guess that the modest little bloodroot, blooming shyly in out-of-the-way places, was related to the proud, dashing poppy, or that the common saxifrage, flowering humbly in rocky clefts, could claim the closest connexion with the great showy hydrangea, queening it in our gardens. Plainly it is with flower people as with human folks; the humblest family has some one individual who seems to make up in grace and charm for all that the others lack.

Such an odd flower is the columbine, and in America so richly coloured! How sweet is the nectar in its long tube-shaped honey-cells! Dainty little horns-of-plenty they are! And queerer than all else, these tubes are really petals, drawn out at the end to fashion the little horns. The sepals are five in number, and if you don't look closely at them you will mistake them for petals too, so like are they in shape to what we usually find doing duty as such. A host of stamens stick out in a dainty golden tassel, but there are only five pistils; you can count them easily.

“Dancing in red and yellow petticoats, to the rhythm of the breeze, along the ledge of some overhanging rock,” says Blanchan, “the columbine coquettes with some Punchinello as if daring him to reach her at his peril.”

For whom are the delicious honey-horns of the columbine filled? No short-tongued insects can reach them that is certain. But stay! Look yonder: there’s a bee drilling a hole into the tip of a horn. Little robber! If he can’t have the honey by fair means he will have it by foul! Ordinarily, however, small bees content themselves with a feast of columbine pollen and pass on. Here comes a great big drummer. Can he manage to enter these blossoms, hanging downward as they do? Certainly, he is a master hand at standing on his head, as we have seen, and in truth the trick “has no more terrors for him,” according to Blanchan, “than a trapeze has for the trained acrobat.”

Butterflies and moths come sailing along, and pause, attracted by the gay red and yellow showcards. But they are not acrobats, and, moreover, their tongues are not fitted to probe into these deep funnel-shaped narrowing pantries. So they flit elsewhere; the bumble-bee too passes on, after a few plunges, and the bulk of the honey-sweet pantries have not been touched.

We feel sure the columbine must have spread her

feast for other lovers, and who so welcome as the tiny humming-bird, the ruby-throated favourite of American children, who is fond of sipping at deep red and yellow cups? It matters not much to him which side up they hang. Nor is he anywise uncertain how to proceed: into the first luscious red horn-of-plenty he dips with vigour, then out and into the next one, and so on until each of the five flower spurs have been emptied; then he attends with businesslike directness to the other horns in the clump, and later to such other plants in the colony as it takes to satisfy his sweet tooth; then he is off and away as suddenly as he came, all unconscious of the pollen he has so plentifully scattered.

In Europe, where there are no humming-birds, the columbine wears a blue dress, and her honey spurs are shorter, stouter, and more curved. For she must depend upon the large bumble-bees to set her seed, so she dresses in their favourite colour, and arranges her pantries for their convenience. None of the columbines has any arrangement for self-fertilization. The seed-vessel is a curious little pod with openings up and down its sides.

Occasionally the columbine is white, so that its name, which comes from a word meaning dove, is not so inappropriate as it would seem.

THE HYACINTH

OF course you know the hyacinth: you have seen its beautiful blue, pink, or white spikes of bloom in the florist's window many times, even if you have never planted the onion-like bulbs in pots of your own to blossom on the window-shelf, or grown them in your garden. Coming with the crocus and narcissus, in early spring, nothing is sweeter or more lovely than its dainty bells of spicy fragrance. And no flower is easier to grow. Once the bulbs are planted they go on increasing from year to year without danger of overcrowding, and no excuse whatever is needed for them to slip through the fence and away, running wild.

The hyacinth belongs to the lily family, and is a very great favourite with people of many countries. It is a native of the Levant, which is the coast and islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, more particularly Syria and Asia Minor.

If we examine the hyacinth bulb carefully, we note that its 'tunic' is made up of leaf-scales, which, instead of going on and forming leaves, remain scales set aside by Nature for a special purpose. Indeed, botanists tell us that some of the scales on

a full-grown bulb are really the fleshy end of the leaf-stalks, little storehouses, if you please, of starch and other plant materials. So you see that a tunic is a very convenient garment; not only does it wrap up the plant, but it feeds it also! It is the sole source of nourishment until the roots and green leaves form and get about their life business of extracting more food from the earth and soil-water, the sun and air; then what is left of the 'tunic,' after giving rise to the *two* 'tunicated' bulbs which are to form the plant's next generation of hyacinths, decays, and still helps by enriching and loosening the soil about the roots of the now independent plant. Many plants, we find, favour the tunic, among them being the tulip, and a certain common garden vegetable which often fills our eyes with tears when we cut it.

If we go a little further into our analysis of the hyacinth bulb, dissecting it piece by piece under a powerful lens, we find that its fleshy scales are folded together very much as the scales are folded about a tree-bud. It reminds us of the surprise packet that has come by post; we go on unwrapping tunic after tunic, until lo! in the very centre of the bulb we find the precious gift—a tiny flower-cluster wrapped about by half a dozen delicate leaves. These are white and fragile and very, very small, but what a wealth of promise is

theirs! Something else there is here, too, that we look at with delight. On either side of the tiny plant stem are the bulb-buds which are the guarantee that where one hyacinth bloomed this year *two* will visit us next season, if all goes well.

If you have ever planted hyacinth bulbs you know just how the plant shoots up under the warm kiss of the sun, and how soon after the first sprig of green appears the hyacinth bells are ready to ring. It seems almost as though some fairy magic had been at work. And, indeed, we are justified in suspecting this when we learn the old, old tale concerning the origin of the hyacinth.

In a certain neighbourhood, long, long ago, lived a youth named Hyacinthus, whose disposition was so sunny that he drew to himself the friendship of Apollo. One day the god came down to earth to enjoy the society of the mortal, and after some delightful hours of friendly intercourse they decided to play a game of quoits, in which game all Greek youths of that age were greatly skilled.

While they were thus occupied in friendly rivalry, Zephyrus, god of the south wind, chanced to pass by. Now it happened that he too loved Hyacinthus, and he was roused to jealousy by the sight of the happy friendship in which he felt he had no part. In a fit of sudden passion he violently blew upon Apollo's quoit just as the god was in the act of

throwing it, so that it struck his playmate and felled him to the ground. Apollo rushed to raise the youth in his arms, but, alas! even he could not recall the fleeting spirit. In a few moments Hyacinthus breathed his last and Apollo vainly reproached himself. "Oh, my beloved Hyacinthus," he cried sorrowfully, "you die robbed of your youth by me! Yours is the suffering, but mine the crime. Would that I might die for you! But since that may not be, you shall live in my memory and my song. And you, beloved, shall become a beautiful flower!"

And so it was.

Next spring, on the spot where the youth's life had ebbed, there sprang up a beautiful blue flower.

"'Tis Hyacinthus, the king's son!" cried the common folks delightedly, and to this day the flower unfolds from the ground each returning spring to remind us of his sad story.

THE MODEST DAISY

ALL the world loves a field of daisies—except the farmer on whose land they are trespassing! There is charm and fortune in them; ask the happy child, who in holidays sits deep in the daisy-field the long hours through, plucking posies or making chains; or ask the maidens who have times untold tested their fate by the old, old process, “He loves me, he loves me not!”

When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.

So sang Shakespeare, while Burns also wrote some beautiful lines to a

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower.

“A little pink and white blossom,” Blanchan termed it, “that hugs the English turf as if it loved it—the true day’s eye, for it closes at nightfall and opens with the dawn.”

There are several members in the clan, among those most familiar being the common white daisy and the yellow ox-eye, which is such a favourite with artists and with city-dwellers who seldom know the pleasures

of the country roadside. The common little dog-fennel, a miserable pest in backyards and gardens, is styled by botanists the pig-sty daisy. And in this case there is something in the name, for as everybody knows this is the very spot the little nuisance likes best!

Type of one of the great plant divisions is the daisy, and that is the reason we have introduced it here. Let us examine a specimen under the lens. A yellow ox-eye will do admirably. First we must note that the narrow orange-yellow 'petals' which make such a beautiful border round the brown centre are really not petals at all. Each one is a 'female floret' whose open corolla has grown large and showy for advertising purposes. "Look!" they cry to all passers. "Nectar here! Stop and taste!"

And sure enough there is! For as we pick the specimen to pieces, to our surprise we find that these yellow florets are merely a beginning. The whole brown centre is made up of tube-shaped blossoms, "huddled together in a green cup as closely as they can be packed." Within each of these tiny brown tubes is a close ring of stamens, standing guard round the little pistil where the seed is to be formed. As the pistil rises through their midst its little brush-like tip sweeps the pollen from the swollen knob-like ends, or anthers, which crown the stamens, and carries it up to where the first visiting insect must remove it.

Bees, wasps, beetles, butterflies, and, more than all, the flies cannot keep away from such a provident hostess, and shortly the table is cleared. Then the two arms of the wise little pistil, which have kept tightly closed for fear of self-fertilization, open out, and a new dish is offered: the honey in the nectaries. Moreover, the little pistil arms exude a sticky substance, so that pollen from another flower is likely to adhere to them. Then the guest with the long tongue is anxiously awaited, and usually he is not long in coming. For, as one writer puts it, all insects look upon the daisy as a store where every want may be supplied. As a result, immense quantities of cross-fertilized seed is set in every patch. "Small wonder that our fields are white with daisies—a long and a merry life to them!"

But to return again to the make-up of the daisy, each one of these little brown tubes is in truth a tiny floret, or a flower by itself, if you please. Therefore the whole bloom may be said to be a compound, or union, of many flower-heads crowded together. Botanists put this in one term: they call it a composite flower. And so many plants are there which bloom in a composite fashion that they have been grouped into one great division called the *Compositæ*. The asters, sunflowers, and dandelions are familiar specimens of this large class. Can you name others?

THE DANDELION

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold.

J. R. LOWELL

IN his book entitled *The Clock of Nature* Dr Hugh Macmillan has a chapter about the dandelion. I first read this nearly twenty-five years ago with a deep sense of awe at this "secret of a weed's plain heart," and you too will, I think, enjoy the wonderful story. I therefore make no apology for inserting it as the conclusion of my little book.¹

"The golden head of the dandelion is not what you would fancy it to be at first sight, a single flower. It is what is called a composite flower, made up of a great many little flowers of the same kind, forming a cluster or bouquet. Each of these separate florets, when you examine it by a magnifying glass, is as perfect as if it were the only one. It has all the parts for producing seed, just as you see in the wild rose or lily. The dandelion produces so many flowers in one head, in order that it may present a bright showy appearance, and so attract insects, which delight in brilliant colours, to feed upon the

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small particles of honey which they find at the bottom of each tiny flower-cup, and to carry with the least expenditure of time and trouble the pollen or fertilizing powder from one to another, that seeds may be formed. When the sun is shining, the flowers of the dandelion unfold themselves in his warm rays in all their splendour, and look like little suns themselves, and then they are visited by the insects. But when there is rain, or when the evening comes, the dandelion shuts up its flowers to protect their honey from being washed away by the showers or the dews. And as no insects are abroad at such times, the honey is by this wise plan preserved for their use afterward. That is the reason why flowers close up and go to sleep, as it is called. The dandelion usually opens between six and seven o'clock in the morning, and closes about the same time in the evening. And this opening and closing of the flowers has always some relation or other to the necessity of guarding the honey in them from the rain or the dew, or the too great heat of the sun, so that by it insects may be tempted to visit them, and help in forming the seeds.

“You have noticed that after a while the golden flowers of the dandelion disappear. The stalks that bore them, which before were upright when the flowers were expanded, lower themselves and lie close to the ground for about twelve days, while the

seeds are ripening. When the seeds are mature they rise up straight again; and in place of the golden blossoms you see round fluffy balls, exceedingly delicate and ghostlike. The poet would say that the sun of the golden blossoms had set, and in its stead the pale round moon of the feathery seeds was taking up the wondrous tale. From every ripe seed springs a stalk crowned with a star of down of the most delicate texture, formed out of the rudiments of the ruff or calyx at the back of each flower. A breath is sufficient for its dispersion, and, carried along by the winds of heaven, the seed furnished with this strange balloon is scattered abroad over the earth. In wet weather the stalks bearing the downy heads contract and cower down among the leaves, seeking protection from them. In fine weather they rise to their full height; and this is a beautiful provision to secure the dispersion of the seed only on dry days, when their feathery wings can float them freely on every breeze. You have often, I am sure, gathered the ripe stalk of the dandelion, and blown away the downy seeds with your breath to find out by those that were left behind the hour of the day, as the poet says:

Dandelion, with globe of down,
The schoolboy's clock in every town,
Which the truant puffs amain,
To conjure lost hours back again.

“Some of you too, I daresay, continue the old custom of splitting the hollow column of the stem at the top into four parts, and rolling them into green curls. And the girls will adorn their hair with these graceful curls, or make chains of dandelion-beads for their necks, by cutting the hollow stems into little round bits.

“You notice further that the flower of the dandelion crowns a tall naked stem, holding it up to the sun, while all the leaves form a rosette at the bottom. The plant at once sends its blossom straight up from its root, because the blossom is the most important part of it. It is this which forms the seed, upon which the spreading of the plant and the life of the race depend. The life of the dandelion, I need not tell you, is in great danger from the kind of situations in which it loves to grow, where it is exposed to continual accidents, and man himself is always destroying it. The very first thing, therefore, that the plant does is to form its flower and seed, so that the future race may be secure whatever becomes of the individual plant; and then it proceeds more leisurely to expand and mature its leaves, which are for its own welfare and which become more luxuriant when the seed is ripened and shed.

“Besides this protection from danger, Nature has given to it another in the bitterness of its stem

and leaves. These are full of a disagreeable milky juice, which prevents most animals from eating them. Then, too, there is the thick, long, and carrot-like root which goes far down into the ground, and takes such firm hold of it that it is difficult to pull up entire. This root fixes it so that it cannot be easily moved, and furnishes it with a store of nourishment sufficient to make it last over the drought of summer and the frost of winter, and all the unfavourable conditions of the weather, until a suitable time comes for it to put forth its leaves and blossoms. This root also contains a bitter principle, which is used as a valuable medicine by doctors, but which most creatures dislike so much that they will not touch it. All these numerous precautions against the dandelion becoming extinct; all these wonderful means for forming and ripening and spreading its seeds are surely most remarkable proofs of God's care for this lowly weed, and of the importance which He attaches to it. When we think of them they teach us to value it too, and to try and make out what are the wise lessons for the sake of teaching which to us God is so carefully preserving it, and making it come up before us year after year as duly as April and May come round.

“How did the dandelion come to be what it is? This is a new question which modern science teaches us to ask. Until a short time ago everybody took it

for granted that a dandelion was always a dandelion ; had been created what it is now and never changed since its creation. But a newer and truer view of Nature has taught us that it has a long history of its own. That history leads us through a series of changes as wonderful as that which the classic fables tell us the beautiful girl Daphne underwent when she was changed into a laurel-bush, or the youth Narcissus, when he was transformed, through constant gazing at his own image in a stream, into a lily. The dandelion has been slowly moulded into its present shape by the force of circumstances. You can trace its history from the simple form of its first flowers, arranged at intervals along the stalk, to the existing composite form of all its flowers, coiled and compressed into one general head ; and it bears in its blossoms the traces of earlier stages. Have you ever noticed the little teeth, like those of a fine saw, at the end of the yellow strap-shaped petals which have given the flower the name of dandelion—a French word meaning the teeth of a lion? These teeth are always five in number ; and they tell us that each of these strap-shaped yellow leaves was once a round flower of five petals, like a wild rose or a wild apple blossom. The teeth indicate the divisions of the old parts of the flower. It is those curious birthmarks and relics of old states left behind in its advancing stages, and still preserved

in the plant, which invest the meanest weed with a fresh and endless interest.

“The dandelion belongs to the largest, oldest, and most widely diffused order of plants. While other orders of plants have died out and become fossil remains in the rocks, this order has survived the geological changes of many different periods, on account of its power of adapting itself to those changes. And these changes, in their turn, have only made it better suited for all the varied soils and climates of the earth at the present day. We find members of this order in every part of the globe, in places as far apart from each other as they can be. It is the prevailing and dominant order of vegetable life, the most highly finished, and the most entirely successful family of plants. And the dandelion is one of the most perfect forms belonging to it. It is the head and crown of the vegetable kingdom, as man is the head and crown of the animal creation. And it is curious how this highest type of plant always is found only where man, the highest type of animal life, is found, and where he dwells or cultivates the soil. It is never found apart from him; it follows him wherever he goes—to America, Australia, and New Zealand; and there in the new home it becomes a silent but eloquent reminder of the dear old land he may never see again.

“We are so accustomed, as I have said, to look

upon the dandelion as a mean, insignificant weed which we pass by heedlessly, or trample under foot, or root out remorselessly from our gardens and streets, that it seems very strange to hear it described by all naturalists as a far higher type of plant-life than a rose or a lily, than even a cedar, an oak, or a palm. Its flowers are more perfectly formed, and its type of structure is more highly organized than these beautiful flowers and magnificent trees. It has a pedigree that goes farther back into the mysterious past than them all; it has got the latest improvements in floral structure as one might say, and is the newest and freshest of all God's works; that on which He has been working, from the first beginning of flowers on the earth until now, to achieve the highest perfection of flower life. Think of the honour which God has thus bestowed upon a humble wayside weed! Truly He exalts the lowly and gives more abundant honour to that which seems most to lack it!"

